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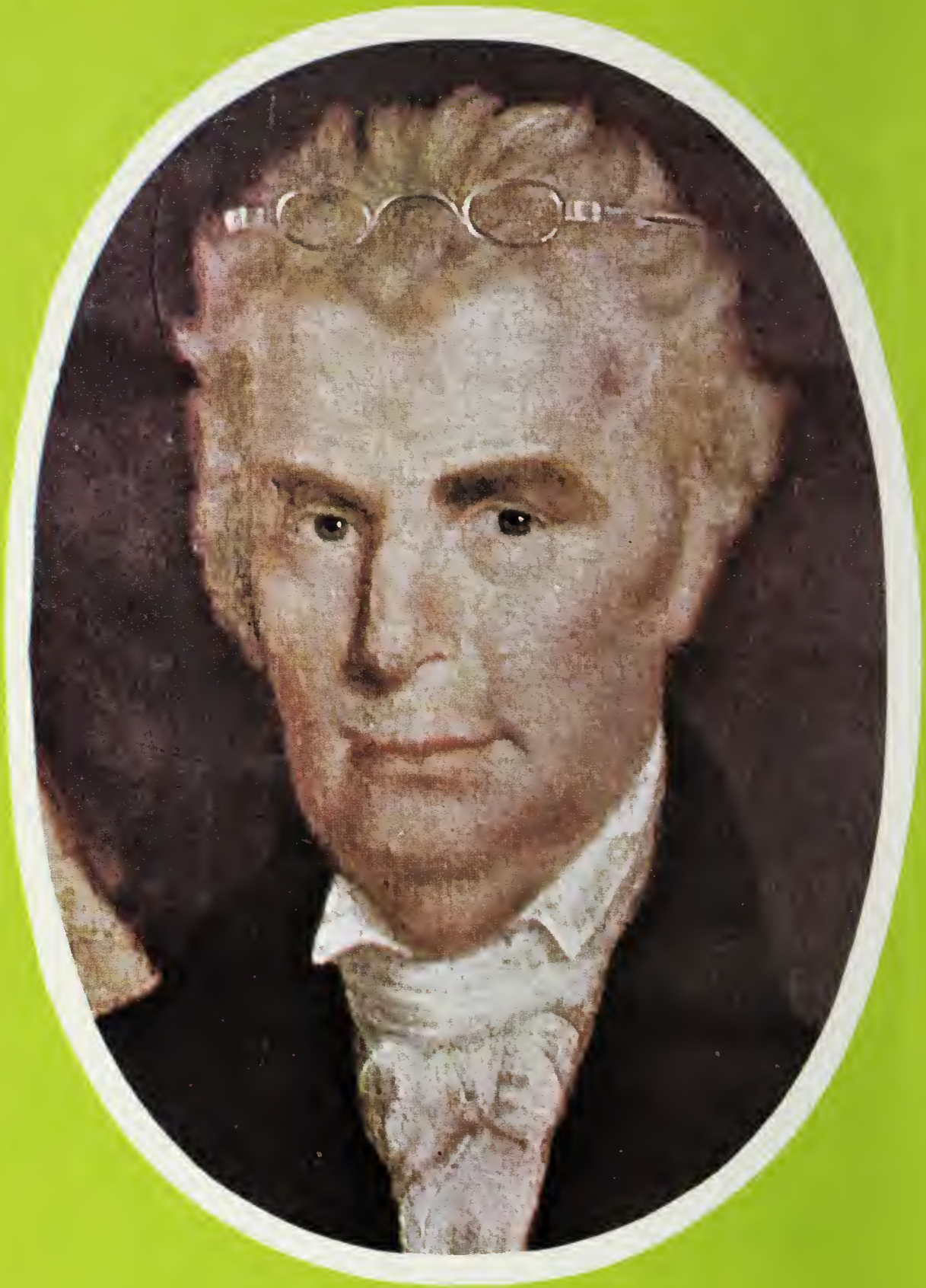

Editor Barton W. Stone

Barton Stone worked on extremely limited finances and was forced to use inferior quality of paper and printing in the production of *The Messenger*. The original copy was set in small type as shown here. It has been enlarged in the reprint. Discolorations due to water and age, tears, holes in pages, cuts, ink blots, pencil underlinings, etc. added to the difficulties in reproducing the work and made it impossible to produce clean pages in many instances.

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"*Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*"—Paul.

VOL. III.] GEORGETOWN, KY. MAY, 1829. [No. 7.

NO. III.

STRICTURES ON MR. N. H. HALL'S SERMON,

CONCLUDED.

Mr. Hall says, "The divinity of Christ is clearly proven by the following considerations, viz: the scriptures speak of him as the Mighty God and Father of eternity. Isa. ix. 6. "For unto us, a child is born; unto us, a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."" Mr. H. adds, "This child born, this Son given, is Counsellor in the eternal counsel of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He is the Mighty God; he is the everlasting Father, or Father of eternity."

By Mr. H's. comment on this passage, he has certainly destroyed its sense; for whoever thought of any one being the Father of eternity? If Christ was, he must have existed before eternity, which was impossible. To be Father of any thing, necessarily implies prior existence to that thing. Thus Mr. H. not only makes Christ to have existed from eternity, but before it; for he says, "he was the Father of eternity."

Mr. H. asserts, that this child born, is Counsellor in the eternal counsel of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The difference between the Prophet and Mr. H. is this: the Prophet speaks of future time, by saying, his name *shall be called* Wonderful Counsellor; whereas, Mr. H. looks back to eternity to find his Counsellor, for he says, "the child was in the eternal counsel, &c." So long as Mr. H. continues to look through spectacles, colored by the Westminster Confession of Faith, and his party, I shall not be surprised, that he should differ from the sacred writers. The eternal counsel, of which Mr. H. speaks, is not in the Bible.

We should bear in mind, that God is the author of the above passage, that the Son of God is the subject; and that the Prophet Isaiah is the describer of this child, or of this Son given: to which add the idea conveyed in verse 7, that the zeal of the Lord will perform this, and the whole subject is easily understood. Taken in its connection, the passage proves, that Jesus Christ is not the eternal, or Almighty God. The eternal God never was

REPRINT OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

It is our conviction that the writings of such men as Barton W. Stone and others who contributed from the fields of labor into the pages of *The Christian Messenger,* constitute some of the richest and most significant material this side of the New Testament.

The Christian Messenger reprint represents the combined efforts of hundreds of people. First, locating a complete set to photograph was a long search—a job we *never* attained! So far as our several months' research revealed, there is no extant complete set of these books in any one collection. Our work of photo reproduction was accomplished through "a little here, a little there," working from the basic set graciously made available by Roscoe Pierson, Librarian, Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, Kentucky. Among others helping in tracing down and supplying original copies were Enos Dowling (Lincoln Bible College), Lester Galbraith (Christian Theological Seminary), R. L. Roberts (Abilene Christian University), and Don DeWelt (Ozark Bible College), Wm. B. Miller (Presbyterian Historical Society), and David McWhirter, (Disciples of Christ Historical Society).

Especially grateful are we to R. L. Roberts, first for his urging that we coordinate the reprinting of the set, and second for producing a general index to the entire series. This required long hours of reviewing articles on his microfilm copy and assigning appropriate titles. The original indices at the end of each volume, as the reader will observe, were vague and inadequate. The general index is at the end of volume 14.

Sincere appreciation is expressed also to the hundreds who have entrusted us at Star Bible with their orders, a vote of confidence that gave us renewed courage and strength. We pray that these men of the early Restoration Movement will be duly honored, that many wise men will be led to their Savior, and that Jehovah's Name may be glorified through His Church now and evermore.

Alvin Jennings
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Fort Worth, Texas 76118

Dec., 1978

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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"*Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*"—PAUL.

VOL. I] GEORGETOWN, KY. NOVEMBER 25, 1826. [NO I.

To illustrate lengthily the importance of the object contemplated in this work, would be unnecessary. Of this the public will judge, to whom the work is now presented.

It is universally acknowledged, by the various sects of Christians, that the religion of Heaven, for centuries past, has fallen far below the excellency and glory of primitive Christianity. The man, who honestly investigates the cause of this declension, and points the proper way of reformation, must certainly be engaged in a work, pleasing to God, and profitable to man. This is our design; and to accomplish this desirable end, shall our best exertions be enlisted and engaged. That these exertions may be better calculated to effect the object contemplated, we invite and solicit the aid of qualified brethren, who feel as we do, an ardent desire for the restoration and glory of the ancient religion of Christ—the religion of love, peace, and union on earth.

That there are errors in the doctrines, as well as in the lives and practices of the various religious denominations now living, I presume, no Protestant will deny. Their various, jarring creeds—their bitter strife and uncharitable opposition to one another—their multiplied divisions and disunion among themselves—their pride and worldly spirit—their death and cold formality:—these are undeniable evidences of the melancholy fact. To have these errors corrected and removed from the church; and to have truth restored in her heaveuly, captivating robes, unadorned with the tinsel of human wisdom, are certainly the pious wishes of every honest Christian. Therefore, unappalled at the dangerous attempt, not discouraged at the attendant difficulties, we will boldly, though humbly, advance to the work. As

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the Bible alone is acknowledged by all Protestants to be the only infallible rule, by which all doctrines and spirits are to be tried; so by this rule we will honestly try the various, jarring doctrines and spirits, which have done so much mischief in the world, for so many centuries back. Should we be so happy as to find the error, we shall be compelled by our benevolence for man, and love of truth, to expose it to view; and to endeavor to exhibit the doctrine of the Bible, unsullied by the unhallowed touch of man's wisdom.

Before we can promise ourselves success, the mind must be previously prepared to enter upon the work.

1. We must be fully persuaded, that all uninspired men are fallible, and therefore liable to err. I think that Luther, in a coarse manner, said *that every man was born with a Pope in his belly.* By which I suppose he meant, that every man deemed himself infallible. Our pride abhors the idea of being accounted *weak.* To give up an opinion, a sentiment or doctrine, and to receive a different one, has been long reckoned a certain evidence of weakness. The public has strangely affixed this stigma on the man, who dares change his opinion. If the various reformers, in the different periods of the world, had been influenced by this principle, what would have been the consequences? Certainly, they would have remained in error—have evaded persecution, and we should now have been under the midnight shades of paganism and popery. If the present generation remain under the influence of the same principle, the consequences must be, that the spirit of free enquiry will die—our liberty lie prostrated at the feet of ecclesiastical demagogues—every sect must remain as it is—their various and contradictory notions must continue, and strife and division remain, in opposition to the will of God, and to the disgrace of Christianity.

To approach the Bible, with a desire and determination to learn and practise the truth there revealed, in despite of all opposition, requires a greater degree of fortitude and self-denial than is generally possessed by professors of religion in the present day. To be stigma-

tized as weak—to be accounted as fools, when we take the best method to become wise—to lose the smiles, approbation and friendship of the circle, in which we have long moved with great pleasure—to incur the frowns of our dearest relatives and friends, the sore displeasure of the sect of Christians, with which we may be united—these are not light things; but these must be expected by the man, that dares change his opinions, from a scriptural conviction that they are wrong.

2. We must possess the mind of the honest Baptist, to be willing to decrease, that Christ may increase—to be willing for truth's sake, to be rejected by all, even to be excluded from the society, with which we may be associated, however popular and respectable it may be. The dread of this has caused thousands to shut their eyes against the light of truth, or if received, to conceal it from the view of their fellows. Should this dread of exclusion influence all, the consequence would be, that all the litigant sects would remain—their discrepant doctrines continue, and division and schism in the body of Christ still abide, in opposition to the will of God. Can these things be right? No Christian will affirm it; all acknowledge them wrong. Therefore the principle, which is the basis of all this wrong, must itself be wrong.

3. We must be willing to give up all worldly gain or wealth, for the sake of truth. Had Paul been unwilling to count all his gain but loss for truth's sake, he never had been a Christian. In the present corrupt state of society in many places, it is found that a man of business cannot well succeed in his pursuit of gain, without being in connexion with some religious society, and that, which is most numerous and wealthy. Should a mechanic, a merchant, a teacher, or even a preacher in such a society, begin to open his eyes to truth, and in its light to see himself in error, with what sore temptations has he to struggle. Says the preacher, should I change my opinions, and reject the standards of this church, I must lose my salary, my whole living, and turn out in an unfriendly world, and with my helpless family face poverty and disgrace with persecution. Says the teacher, if I

change my sentiments, I shall lose the patronage of this church; they will no longer entrust their children to my care, and want must be my lot. So the merchant and mechanic—if they change their opinions, their gain must be diminished. "Buy the truth," is the advice of Wisdom. Whoever obtains it must give gold and silver for it, in the sense I have stated. But surely it *excels rubies.*

4. We must learn "to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils"—from man, however pious, learned and great he may be accounted. They are all fallible; and their jarring creeds and confessions of faith, too plainly evince this humiliating truth. If we cease not from them, but receive their opposite dogmas as truth, then the schisms of the body of Christ must continue with all their attendant evils. We should follow them as far as they follow Christ, but no farther. We should bring their doctrines to the Bible, and judge for ourselves, as we will at last have to be judged by our *own* works.

5. We must believe that the Bible was addressed to rational creatures, and designed by God to be understood for their profit. When we open the Bible under the impression that it is a book of mysteries, understood only by a few learned ministers, we are at once discouraged from reading and investigating its contents. But believing it was written for our learning and profit, and therefore addressed to our understanding, we are encouraged to read and diligently search its sacred pages. The man, who does this, with prayerful attention to its instructions, will find the truth, and walking in it, will *find her ways pleasantness, and all her paths peace.*

I have now stated what I think necessary to prepare the mind for the investigation and reception of truth. Were we all thus prepared, and were we in this spirit to read the Bible, great and glorious would be the effects. How soon would the dark clouds of error fly before the brilliant rays of truth! How soon would the divided flock of the great Shepherd, hear his voice and flow together unto him! How soon would they leave the barren, solitary wilderness, where they have been long

scattered, and hungry, and enter into the rich pastures, prepared for them! How soon would the world, seeing all Christians united, believe and be saved! O Lord, help, for the glory of thy name! EDITOR.

OF THE FAMILY OF GOD ON EARTH.

That God has a peculiar family on earth, is an undisputed truth. Eph. III. 15—"Of whom (Christ) the whole family in heaven and earth is named." It is all-important that the character of this family, its privileges, its rule of conduct, and its name, be clearly ascertained from the Bible. This being done, the effect must be good. To these points, we shall particularly attend.

1st—*The character of this family.*—Each member of this family has trusted in Christ. Eph. I. 13—*In whom* (Christ) *ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.* This is in perfect accordance with the purpose of God, expressed by his prophet Isaiah, and confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ and by his apostle Paul; that *In his name shall the Gentiles trust.* Matt. XII. 21—Rom. XV. 12. None are worthy of being called members of this family, or will ever be acknowledged as such, who have not trusted in him their present and eternal interests—in him for salvation, grace and eternal life.

But will any trust in him before they are convinced of their own ignorance and weakness—of their own inability to save themselves? No: for as long as they have *confidence in the flesh*, they see no necessity of a Saviour. Again: Will any trust in him before they believe that he is able and willing to save them, wise to guard and guide them, benevolent and merciful to receive and bless them? No, certainly. They must believe that he possesses these attributes, or in him they cannot trust.

Another query naturally is suggested, What led them thus to believe in Christ, so as to trust in him? I answer, The revealed truth of God in the scriptures. *These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have*

life through his name. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. John xx. 31—Eph. i. 13. In the scriptures are exhibited, not only the evidences of his being the promised Messiah, sent to be the Saviour of the world; but also his power and willingness to save—his love and benevolence to man—his truth and faithfulness to his promises, and his delight in bestowing his mercy and grace on believing sinners. Thus putting no confidence in the flesh, believing that Jesus alone can save, they have trusted in him without reserve; crying with sinking Peter, *Lord, save, I perish.*

They, who have believed and trusted in Christ, are sealed with the holy spirit of promise. *In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy spirit of promise.* Eph. i. 13. This spirit is the spirit of God—the spirit of Christ, or Christ dwelling in us; for these different expressions mean the same thing, as is evident from Rom. viii. 9, 10. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead, &c.* It is the spirit of holiness, which, when received, hungers and thirsts for righteousness, pants for God and a perfect conformity to his lovely character. It is the spirit of adoption, *whereby we cry Abba, Father.* It is the spirit of love to God, and man. It is the spirit which unites the whole family of God. It is the spirit of power, by which we are enabled to oppose successfully every temptation, and every enemy. It is the spirit of liberty, not of bondage; *for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* In a word, it is the spirit, the fruits of which are *love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and temperance.* Gal. v. 22, 23.

Those, who have not this spirit, belong not to the Lord's peculiar family. *For if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Know ye not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?* Rom. viii. 9—2 Cor. xiii. 5. They, who have this spirit, have *Christ formed in them, the hope of glory.* The

very mind and character of their Lord. do they possess. As the seal or signet, impressed on wax, leaves the image of itself; so the spirit of Christ as a seal, leaves its own image on the heart of every believer. This is the mark of his family. By this shall all men know them. By this we are to know that we are the children of God. By this shall we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. This person, whether bond or free, black or white, rich or poor, prince or slave, is a child of God, the favorite of heaven. How solemnly does our Lord warn us against offending and despising one of these little ones that believe in him! Matt. 18. Shall this man, who has believed in the Lord Jesus, and trusted in him, and is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, be denounced, because he has not received a party name and mark? because he cannot receive the creed and dogmas of human invention? or because he cannot pronounce the Shibboleth of reputed *orthodoxy?* How many, reputed orthodox, have not the mark of God's people! and how many, reputed heterodox, have it so evident, that all may see it!

Another character of this family is that they are quickened or made alive. *You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.* Eph. II. 1. Once they were dead in sin as others—dead to God, as having no desires after him—no delight in him nor in his ways—no love to him nor fellowship with him; but they were alive to the world—to the would their desires were drawn—on it was their love fixed, and in its ways were their whole delight. Now they are alive to God—to him are the desires of their hearts—on him is their love supremely fixed, and in him and in his service are all their delights.

They are saved from sin—from the love of sin; for *they hate it with a perfect hatred*—from the practice of sin; for they endeavor *to avoid every appearance of evil,* and *he that is born of God sinneth not*—and from the dominion of sin; for *they being made free from sin, have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.*

They are reconciled to God. Once enmity existed between them and their God. He was light, they were

darkness—He was holy, they were unholy—He was good, they were evil. How can natures so opposite be reconciled? *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?* But they, *who were once darkness, are now made light in the Lord*—they, who were once unrighteous, are now made righteous *even as he is righteous*, and holy even as he is holy. Now they are partakers of the divine nature, and therefore the reconciliation between them and their God is effected. Being reconciled to God, they are also reconciled to every perfection of his nature—to the law and gospel—to his government and people—to all his dispensations in providence. *Not my will, but thine be done*, is the language of his heart. We might proceed more particularly to delineate the character of God's family; but we shall for the present dismiss this subject, for the consideration of another.

The privileges of this family.—It has pleased God to bestow privileges distinguishingly great on this his family on earth—privileges high, above all comparison. They are acknowledged by him as *his children; and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. All things are theirs, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are theirs; and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* 1 Cor. III. 22—Rom. VIII. 17.

Every member of the family has an equal right to all these things by the gift of God, their common father: who then shall dare presume to debar any, even the least, from the enjoyment of them? We will state a case. An earthly father has a numerous family of children. Wishing to enjoy their company, and that they might enjoy each other, he makes a feast and invites them all on a certain day to come. They all come at his invitation. The father sits at the head of the table, and kindly invites them to sit down and partake of his provisions. They advance to the table. But says one to his brother, Thomas, you shall not sit down, and eat of this provision? for I consider your political opinions as subversive of our good government, and therefore deem you unworthy

of this privilege. Says, a second son, John, I debar you from sitting down with us, and partaking of these provisions, because I view your federal notions as aiming a deathly blow at our happy constitution. And you, Richard, says a third, must stand back, for your democratic principles render you unworthy of this high privilege of sitting down and eating and drinking with us. Thus in an authoritative manner they debar each other from their father's table. What must be the feelings of the wounded father? Would he not indignantly frown upon such conduct? Would he not thus speak?—Sir, who gave you authority to debar my children from my table? Have they not an equal right with yourself to these provisions? Are they not my children as well as you? Have I not invited them? Have I made any difference among you? How dare you thus presume?

How easy the application. God has made rich provision for his children. All are invited to come and receive. But how often have we seen the presumptuous man, endeavoring to thrust the children of heaven from the company of Christians, and from the privileges of God's house? How often do we hear him presume to lock the door of heaven against them, and sink them anathematized to hell? We have seen a poor worm, swollen with self-importance, assume the seat of God at the Lord's table, and utter such language as this: In the name of God, and by his authority, I debar from this table, all that do not believe this and that doctrine peculiar to his party. To speak in the name of God, is to speak as God; and to profess to speak and act by his authority in such matters, is easy; but it requires better proof than he is able to give, to confirm it to be true. If God has given this authority to uninspired man, who has it? Is it the Pope, or Luther, or Calvin, or Arminius? To what one sect of the many is it given? Is it given to one or all of them? If to one only, it is important to know that one; for that one sect, speaking truly in the name of God, and acting by his authority, must be infallible. If the authority be not confined to one, but given to every sect, then every sect must be infallible. This stubborn facts

dery. While such unwarranted authority is assumed, and exercised, confusion, Babel-confusion must continue, as it long has contined in the family of God.

For more than a thousand years has Zion been in the wilderness, driven there by the beast, the man of sin, who has assumed the seat of God, and presumes to speak in his name, and to act by his authority. The Pope of Rome thus presumes, and therefore consistently, pretends to infallibility. Shall every sectarian make the same pretension? If not, let him never presume to say that he speaks and acts in the name of God, and by his authority, without sufficient proof for his assertion.

The rules of this family.—In every well regulated family, certain rules are ordained for its conduct. Should the father of a large family of children give different and contradictory rules to several different portions of his family, would not discord, strife and division be the unhappy consequences? If the father approve of the conduct of one part of his family for acting up to the code of rules given them; for the same reason he must approve of another part of his family for acting up to the contrary rules given them. In doing thus, he must approve of opposite conduct—right and wrong. No earthly father, it is believed, was ever found on earth, who acted thus imprudently. And will any man venture to affirm, that God gave to different parts of his family discrepant and opposite rules for their conduct? Would not this be the very foundation of discord, strife and division among them? And how could their heavenly Father so expressly forbid these things, and enjoin the contrary?

Will any plead that God has given uninspired men authority to make and give rules for the regulation of his family? If he has, to whom is the authority given? Is it to the Presbyterian ministry? Is it to the Methodists or Baptists? If the Presbyterians have this divine authority exclusively given to them, then the Methodists, the Baptists and all others must be wrong; for they have made rules contrary to those made by Presbyterians, and these are, according to the hypothesis, of divine authority. If this divine authority be given to the Methodists, or Bap-

fists, or to any other sect, then every sect must be wrong, which differs from that one, to which this divine authority is given to make and give rules of faith and practice to the Lord's family. Will any plead that this authority is given to all the sects? Then it will follow that God has given a divine warrant and authority for division, discord and strife among his family—and yet has expressly forbidden them! Should any yet plead that this divine authority is given to them, we demand the proof. Either let them shew a *thus saith the Lord*, or confirm their word as Christ and his apostles did, by miracles. Then, and not till then, can we believe them; and not till then can an honest man claim such authority; nor till then should Christians receive and adhere to such rules.

Hence we assuredly conclude, that the various and opposite authoritative rules, creeds and disciplines, invented by the various sects, are unauthorized by God—are the foundation of discord, strife and division, and therefore contrary to the will of God. If the will of God is that all his people be one, and that there be no division among them, then to make such rules and adhere to them must be rebellion against God and his government, and a war against the spirit of truth, which calls upon all the family to unite and walk by the same rule. This conclusion may appear to be awful; but will candor deny its truth? Innumerable good men have never seen the evil of such things; but now it is high time to open their eyes, and reform.

The inspired Apostle exhorts the family to walk *by the same rule*. Phil. III. 16. It is not pretended that this rule was any other than the New Testament. This God gave for the regulation of his family, and he judged it the best. This will promote union, peace and love in the whole family, if they obey it. *Mark them* (says Paul.) *who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrines which ye have learned, and avoid them.* Rom. XVI. 17. That doctrine learned and received by the family of old yet exists in the New Testament. It cannot be denied, that various divisions have been made, and do yet exist, contrary to this doctrine. Therefore, every man that

makes division contrary to the doctrine of the New Testament is *in ipso facto*, a schismatic, and ought to be avoided. It is important too, that such should be avoided; or the Apostle would not have pressed, and urged the exhortation with such forcible language. *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that cause divisions*, &c.

An important query naturally rises—how are such to be avoided? I know of but one way: Let the whole family of God reject their various, authoritative creeds, and receive the New Testament. as the only rule of faith and practice—let them reject all party names, and receive that, given by divine authority at Antioch, the name *Christian*. Let them endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace, till they all come to the unity of the faith. Let them learn and practise the old, neglected, but all-important doctrine of forbearance one towards another. Let them lay aside *all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking, and as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word.* In a word, let them read the Bible much, and obey its precepts in all things; then shall Zion's glory shine forth, and engage the world to glorify God.

Of the name of this family.—1. It is evident that the name given by divine authority to this family, is Christian. "And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts xi. 26. They, who are acquainted with the Greek language, well know, that the word in this text translated *were called*, should be rendered *were called by divine appointment*. Thus Dr. Doddridge translates it: "*And the disciples were by divine appointment first named Christians at Antioch.*" He adds, "I think with Dr. Benson, that the use of the word Chrematisai (were called) implies, that it was done by *a divine direction*, and have translated it accordingly; (compare Matt. ii. 12, 22; Luke ii. 16; Acts x. 22; Heb. viii. 11, 7, 12, 25.)

The celebrated Dr. A. Clark on this text says: "The word Chrematisai—which we translate *were called*—signifies, in the New Testament, *to appoint, warn*, or *nominate by divine direction*. In this sense the word is used Matt. ii. 12; Luke ii. 26; Acts x. 22. If therefore the

name was given by *divine appointment*, it is most likely that Saul and Barnabas were directed to give it; and that, therefore, the name *Christian* is from God." The Dr. farther remarks: "A Christian, therefore, is the highest character, which any human being can bear upon earth; and to receive it from God, as those appear to have done, how glorious the title!"

Similar are the remarks of President Davis, in his sermon on this text. To adduce more authority is deemed unnecessary to substantiate the true meaning of this text.

2. It appears that by this name the family was ever afterwards called, and known. Acts xxvi. 28: *And Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* Agrippa well knew that this was the name by which they were called.

3. It was for bearing the name *Christian* that they were reproached and persecuted of old. 1 Pet. iv. 14: *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.* 16: *Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.* It is well known, that the edicts of the persecuting emperors of Rome were against those who bore the name of Christ, or were called Christians. Some, to avoid persecution and imminent death, denied the name; but others, more faithful, owned it in defiance of affliction, persecution, and death, and suffered martyrdom for it. Hence, in high commendation of this firmness, the Lord addresses the persecuted Churches—*For my name's sake thou hast labored, and hast not fainted.—Thou holdest fast my name.—Thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name.* Rev. ii. 3, 13; iii, 8.

4. By the event of the disciples being called Christians by divine appointment, an ancient prophecy was fulfilled. Isai. lxii. 2: *And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* This new name is *Christian*, for this is the only name given to them by divine appointment, that we read of in the New Testament.

5. Into this name they were baptized. A party, divisive spirit once prevailed in the church at Corinth. The

apostle Paul hastened to check it, knowing its baneful tendency. While they were saying, I am of Paul—and I of Apollos—and I of Cephas—and I of Christ; he asks the question, Were you baptized into the name of Paul? If they had been baptized into his name, they would then have had grounds for saying, they were of Paul, as bearing his name. They would have been Paulites. So had they been baptized into the name of Apollos, or Cephas, they would have been called properly Apollosites, or Cephasites. But as they were all baptized into the name of Christ, they should all be called *Christians*.

The family of God is torn and divided into almost innumerable parties, and each party distinguished by a peculiar name; as Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, &c. Were Paul here again, would he not be grieved and pressed in spirit, as he once was at Athens? Would he not reprove sharply, and call these divisions, carnality? Would he not labor to destroy this party spirit, and these party names? Certainly, he would. For he would well know that, these existing, the unity of the family could never be effected, and therefore, the will of God must be opposed. Will any contend that these party names are of divine appointment? Not one will presume it. For it is a fact, that some of these party names were given by the spirit of wickedness. And can Christians contentedly wear them? What should we think of a wife, who should reject the name of her husband, and assume that of another man? Would not her conduct excite suspicion? Would it not be a ground of jealousy?

Will any plead that these names are innocent? I will grant that an individual may wear a party name, without injury to himself; but I am persuaded that it is a serious injury to society. With a party name are associated all the supposed errors of that party. To elucidate the subject, I will suppose a probable, if not a common case. Two travellers, strangers to each other, are going the same road. They fall in together. After common salutations, they introduce the subject of religion. It is found to be an agreeable subject to each. They

talk of the goodness, love and grace of God—of the Savior of sinners—of regeneration—of heart experience, &c. They feel a sweet union of spirit, and fellowship for each other. Presently it is unhappily found out by them, that one is a Baptist and the other a Methodist. The Baptist views the Methodist with all the train of supposed errors attached to the name, and feels the bonds of fellowship dissolving. The Methodist is no less affected towards the Baptist. For with the name Baptist are associated the heart-chilling doctrines of eternal election, reprobation, &c. &c. The union begins to dissolve; and cold indifference succeeds his fervent charity. Now, what but the name produced these effects?

But few professors in the present day, but know these things to be correct and true facts. If so, who will plead for party names? Who will deny the name given by Divine appointment, and assume another? The will of God is that his family be called Christians, else he would not have given them the name. Who, in opposition to his will, shall willingly assume and bear another name? I cannot view it a light matter.

It is frequently asked, Why so much zeal in the present day, against authoritative creeds, party names, and party spirits? I answer for myself: because I am assured, they stand in the way of Christian union, and are contrary to the will of God.

It is again asked, Why so zealous for Christian union? I answer, because I firmly believe that Jesus fervently prayed to his Father, that believers might all be one—that the world might believe in him as sent by the Father. I also firmly believe, that the will of God is that all should be one; else he would not have so frequently enjoined upon them, that they should be perfectly united in one, and that there be no divisions among them—he would not have so severely discountenanced disunion, by saying that such as were disunited *were carnal, and walked as men.* Believing these things, can we be blamed by the pious for our zeal in promoting union, and in aiming at the destruction of disunion, its causes and baleful effects? Were we to be silent, should we not be

unfaithful, not declaring the whole will of God to our fellow-creatures? Shall we stand and see the world in wickedness, knowing that they will not believe till all Christians are one? Shall we refrain from lifting up our voice, and pleading for the truth of God? If we oppose the union of believers, we oppose directly the will of God, the prayer of Jesus, the spirit of piety, and the salvation of the world. If we contend for party creeds, party names, and party spirits, we contend for disunion, for these are among the chief causes of it.

I ask, are not the divine commands, *walk by the same rule—be perfectly united in one spirit, in one body*—and *let there be no division among you?* Are not these commands binding on every believer, of every name? None will presume to deny this truth. I farther ask, Is not the person guilty, who knows this, yet will not do it? It cannot be denied.

Some try to excuse themselves by saying, they ardently desire union, and pray daily to God for it. Do these people expect that God will work miracles to effect this union? Do they not know that he has ordained the means to effect this end? and that these means are within the power of us all? I will propose a case. Here are three parties, established on three different creeds. In each of these parties are obedient believers, who are persuaded that division is an evil, and that union is the will of God and their duty. They determine to do their duty; but how shall they proceed? Let them all agree *to walk by the same rule*, the New Testament. Could they for this be blamed by the candid of any party? Does not every party confess that its own rules are fallible, and that the Bible is the only infallible rule? Do they not act wisely then, who give up the fallible for the infallible? Candor would blush to deny.

Again: Let the believers in each party adopt the name *Christian*, as that given by divine appointment, and let them give up the party name, by which they have been distinguished from others. Let them relinquish their party-spirit, and party interests, and agree to unite their endeavors to promote and advance the king-

dom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We are assured, that they who would act thus, must suffer much opposition and persecution from all those in a different spirit. But let the Christians of every party, unawed by the frowns and menaces of men, do right. Who, instructed in the revelations of God, can in conscience deny that such would do right? We think there are none.

There are many preachers in the world, who often zealously preach the doctrine of union, and eulogize it in high terms; yet these men, though they know and preach the truth, remain inactive in promoting it. Like the Pharisaic doctors, *they say and do not.* Can such men be honest? If they were, would they not labor to do what they declared to be right? Would they not step forth into the will of God, and be an example to the flock, and say *be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ?*

The objections to Christian union shall be attended to in our next. EDITOR.

MR. JOHN WESLEY'S THOUGHTS.

"WE may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom; but if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? just as much as it avails the devil and his angels. I will not quarrel with you about any opinion; only see that your heart be right towards God, that you love the Lord Jesus Christ, that you love your neighbors, and walk as your master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions; I am weary to bear them: my soul loathes this frothy food. Give me a solid and substantial religion; give me an humble and gentle lover of God and man: a man full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labor of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of. Whosoever doeth the will of my Father, who is in Heaven, the same is my brother, my sister and mother."

The Editor has lately returned from Tennessee.—While he was there, a separation took place in the Elk River association of Baptists. The causes, which led to this event, were, that some of the preachers, convinced of the evil effects of man-made Creeds, and doctrines, ventured boldly to preach against them. For their opposition to the doctrine of trinity and of the Son of God, as held by the *orthodox*, they were charged with heresy. They attended the Association, prepared to answer the charges against them. The *ultimatum* was, that eleven of the Association declared themselves independent of that body, and withdrew. This information the Editor received from a member of that Association. The event took place in September last.

The Gospel Luminary for August, 1826, informs us that about 60 Methodist preachers, disaffected with their government, met in convention in New-York city, the 31st of May last, pursuant to appointment, and continued several days in session. After pointing out in their *declaration of independence*, the many evils they have endured, they make the following disclosure:

"We (say they) submit the following facts to an enlightened public—

"1. The Legislative, Judicial, and Executive powers, being assumed by any one man, or body of men, constitutes the essence of *despotism*.

"2. Those powers are all assumed and exercised by the Bishops and Itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and is therefore (in the opinion of this convention) *real despotism*.

"3. That the Methodist Episcopal Church have not derived Episcopal order, or power, by regular succession (could a *regular succession be proved by any Church*,) but have (in the opinion of this convention,) surreptitiously, and against all regular order, assumed the same.

"4. The government of the Methodist Episcopal Church. not being in accordance with the civil institutions of our free and happy country; should its influence become universal, would (in the opinion of this con-

vention) in time, endanger our form of government.

"5. Having failed in every attempt to obtain a reform, in which our civil as well as religious rights would be better secured, we, the delegates from the different secessions from the said Methodist Episcopal Church, have assembled ourselves in the city of New-York, in convention, appealing to the great Head of the Church for the purity of our motives, and the sincerity of our hearts and intentions, and imploring divine aid and assistance, do ordain and establish the following Constitution of our Church, to be known by the name of the METHODIST SOCIETY."

This Constitution we have not seen; but we seriously doubt whether it be equal to that *ordained* and *established* by the Head of the Church. Nay: we are fully persuaded it must be greatly inferior. For in their Constitution all Christians cannot agree, and therefore cannot unite. But in the Bible, the Constitution ordained and established by infinite Wisdom, they can and will agree. We think it is generally acknowledged, that the Bible will ultimately prevail, and that all other Constitutions, formed by the wisdom of man, must sink into neglect and ruin. Not doubting the *purity of their motives*, nor *the sincerity of their hearts and intentions*, yet we firmly believe, that their new Constitution, and name, will be additional barriers to the union of Christians. Of this we hope they will be convinced, and will speedily reform; and instead of saying, "We, ——, do ordain and establish the following Constitution of *our Church*, to be known by the name of the METHODIST SOCIETY;" they will say, "We do receive and adopt the Constitution of the Church of God, the Bible, and wish to be known by the name of Christians." EDITOR.

From the Christian Inquirer.

THE EMPEROR (OF GERMANY) JOSEPH'S PRAYER.

THE following prayer, extracted from an old German work under the title of Joseph's Gebethuck, (the Emperor's Prayer Book.) which was published in the Christian Reformer (England) for November last, is worthy of

the serious consideration of all professing Christians. It breathes throughout the whole of it, so much of the spirit of true religion, that it cannot fail of being approved by every liberal minded person.

PRAYER.

"O THOU eternal, incomprehensible Being! who art the fountain of mercy and the source of love. Thy sun lights equally the Christian and the Atheist; Thy showers equally nourish the fields of the believers and the infidels: The seed of virtue is found even in the heart of the impious and the heretic. From Thee I learn, therefore, that diversity of opinion does not prevent thee from being a beneficent Father to all mankind. Shall I then, thy feeble creature, be less indulgent? Shall I not permit my subjects to adore Thee in whatsoever manner they please? Shall I persecute those, who differ from me in point of thinking? Shall I spread my religion with the point of my sword? O Thou! whose mighty power and ineffable love embrace the universe, grant that such erroneous principles may never harbor in my breast! I will try to be like Thee, as far as human efforts can approach infinite perfection. I will be as indulgent as Thou to all men, whose tenets differ from mine, and all unnatural compulsion in point of conscience shall be banished forever from my kingdom. Where is the religion that does not instruct us to love virtue and to detest vice? Let all religions, therefore, be tolerated. Let all mankind pay their worship to Thee, thou eternal Being! in the manner they think best. Does an error in judgment deserve expulsion from society? And is force the proper way to win the heart, and bring the swerving mind to a true sense of religion? Let the shameful chains of religious tyranny be parted asunder, and the sweet bonds of fraternal amity unite all my subjects forever. I am sensible that many difficulties will occur to me in this bold attempt, and that most of them will be thrown in my way by those very persons, who style themselves Thy ministers; but may Thy almighty power never forsake me! O Thou eternal and incomprehensible Being! fortify my holy resolutions with Thy love, that I may

surmount every obstacle; and let that law of our Divine Master, which inculcates charity and patience, be always impressed upon my heart. Amen."

The progress of liberal principles in Tennessee has been very far beyond our most sanguine anticipations. Its advocates have been opposed with all the might and ingenuity of man, aided by the popularity of their party, the long received dogmas of *orthodoxy*, and the furious zeal of bigotry. The more intelligent begin to see the weakness of their own arguments and aids to arrest the progress of these principles. One, a preacher of eminence in that country, lately in his address to a vast assembly, after having exhausted his store of arguments against those, who opposed the *orthodox* notions of Trinity, of the Son of God, and of atonement, observed *that the civil authorities ought to interpose and put them down!* Some gentlemen of real republican principles, though not professors of religion, in disgust rose up and left the assembly. This information the Editor received while in that country, from a respectable source.

The brethren of the Christian name are not discouraged at this opposition, but zealously persevere in propagating what they deem to be the truth. They met in Conference, in August last, near Murfreesborough, and enjoyed a refreshing season from the presence of the Lord. About thirty believed and were baptized. The names of the Elders in that Conference are as follows:

John Bowman, Wm. Moore, Ephraim D. Moore, B. F. Hall, Wm. D. Jourdan, Abner Hill, James Y. Green, John Hooton, Francis A. Stone, Robert Randolph, Mansel W. Matthews, Wm. Clapp, Rob't Bates, Jno. Northcross, James Northcross, John O. Scott, Persius E. Harris, John M. Barnet, John Roberts, James E. Matthews, Crocket M'Donald, John M'Donald, Elisha Price, Elisha Randolph, Jno. Parkhill, Thacker Griffin, Lorenzo Griffin, Wm. D. Carns, Andrew Davis, John Green, Abner Peeler, John Mulky, Philip Mulky, Willis Hudleston, Wm. Gilbreath, Samuel D. Dewit, James Griffee, John M'Cartney, Robert Pedigo, Robert Leeper, —— Stover,

Elihu Randolph, Isaac Mulky, Wm. Chaffin, —— Johnson. The unordained preachers are, John Ward, Richard Lane, Calaway M'Gee, Henry Hays, &c.

The Churches in Tennessee and Alabama are numerous and fast increasing. We have recently received accounts from those countries, that at their meetings from 30 to 40 are frequently added to the Church. Many of the Elders are men of fine talents, of warm piety, and zeal, and are highly respected and beloved *for their works' sake*. May that unanimity and brotherly love, which have ever marked their course, still continue, to the glory of their Lord, and to the prosperity of Zion!

We have just received the printed minutes of a Christian Conference, held in Harrison county, Indiana, on the 1st of September, 1826. The names of the Elders and unordained preachers in this Conference, are as follows:

Elders.—Hugh Cole, Josiah H. Yager, James Dougherty, Simon Hiller, Wm. R. Davis, David Morriss, Reuben Duggans, Sherman Babcock, Clement Nance, Elisha Gun, Jesse Lucas, John Lucas, John Rogers, Adam Payne. *Unordained Preachers.*—Wm. Lindsay, Wm. Ellis, Barzillai Willie.

From the face of the minutes, it appears that great harmony and peace exist among the members composing this Conference. May these Christian graces forever dwell with them! May they never undertake to legislate for the Churches, nor attempt to wrest from them the right of independent and self-government, according to the New Testament!

OBITUARY.

Died, in July last, in Tennessee, Elder Daniel Travis. He was taken sick on a preaching tour, and died near Gallatin, before he could reach home, and before his family could see him. He left a wife and six children to lament their loss. His numerous friends express their hearty grief in tears, sighs, and lamentations. For

about twenty years, he had been a zealous, highly respected, and successful preacher of the gospel, in the Church of Christ. His public exhibitions marked the man of intellect and deep research. His addresses were lucid, argumentative, and impressive. He was beloved, even by those who differed from him in opinion. None questioned his honesty, piety, or great talents, both natural and acquired. He died as he lived, in the unwavering faith of that gospel, which he had preached to others. He left the world in the full assurance of a blissful immortality. His body lies interred in Gallatin.

Also, in October last, died, Elder John Mavity, in Indiana. He was an Elder in the Church of Christ for many years, greatly beloved for *his works' sake*, for his zeal in the cause of his Lord, and for his able and dignified defence of the gospel. He was bold, but unassuming and humble in preaching the word. The churches in Indiana, have sustained a great loss by his death. To promote their good, were his life and labors devoted. His exemplary piety, his indefatigable exertions to advance his master's cause, his meekness of wisdom, and his unwearied endeavors to keep the peace and unity of the churches, endeared him to all. A wife and children are left to grieve on earth, from whence he is taken to the rest prepared for him in Heaven.

Also, in March last, died, Elder William Hamilton Gray, near Bloomington, Indiana. He was cut off in the bloom of youth. At an early age he professed religion, and having finished his Academic studies, he devoted his time to the study of the Bible. He soon became remarkable for his great proficiency in Bible Theology. He was ordained to the work of the Lord, and labored with zeal and success, till he sunk, under the weight of disease, into the grave. In him the Church of Christ has sustained great loss. He died in the full assurance of hope, in the unshaken faith of the gospel, which he had declared to the world, and in the full confidence and joyful anticipations of eternal life.

☞ The Editor solicits those who hold prospectuses for this

work to send forward immediately the names of the subscribers. It is hoped that the friends of the work will exert themselves to obtain more subscribers, and send him such religious communications as will be profitable for the public to know. The postage must be paid, or communications cannot be received by mail.

AGENTS,

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

KENTUCKY.—Stephen G. Marshall and A. M'Hatton—*Georgetown*; Benjamin Cassell—*Lexington*; Elder Michael Rice—*Jessamine County*; C. C Moore—*Winchester*; Elder Josiah H. Yager—*Elizabethtown*; John Bryan—*Hopkinsville*; Elder H Osborne—*Bethel*; Richard Hart—*Flemingsburg*; Elder John Jones—*Liberty*; Andrew Henderson—*Everett's House*; Thomas Hall—*Frankfort*; Elder Thos. M. Allen—*Union Meeting House*; A. Perrin—*Stanford*; Henry Parker and H. F. Wilson—*Paris*; Dr. A. W. Bills—*Millersburg*; Elder John Rogers—*Carlisle*; Jas. Houston—*North Middletown.*

INDIANA.—Thomas Parsons—*Terre Haute*; William Armstrong—*Bloomington*; Elder Clement Nance—*Nancesville*; Elder David Stewart—*Tuckersville*; Obadiah Seward—*Rushville.*

OHIO—Elder David Purviance—*Eaton*; Elder Levi Purviance—*New Paris*; Elder Isaac Waller—*Dublin*; Elder George Alkire—*Williamsport*; G. Foose—*Springfield, Clarke County*; E. Vickars—*Franklin*; Elder S Kyle; *Troy & Piqua*; Isaac Sparks, G. Venousdol. and Jos. Carnahan—*Cincinnati & Sprinfield, Hamilton County*; Elder Joseph Baker—*Chillicothe.*

TENNESSEE—Elder William Jourdan—*Sparta*; Dr. Joel B Sanders—*Columbia*; Jas. Shelton—*Round Lick*; Elder John Green—*Lebanon*; Elder A. Davis—*M'Minnville*; William Read—*Readyville*; Elders Jno. Bowman & Wm. Moore—*Murfreesborough*; Wm. Bell—*Gallatin.*

ALABAMA—Jas. Matthews—*Florence.*

ILLINOIS.—Daniel Travis—*Vincennes Ind.*

VIRGINIA—Parker Lucas—*Giles Court House*; Jno. Welch—*Moorefield, Hardy County*

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

VOL. I.] GEORGETOWN, KY. DECEMBER 25, 1826. [NO 2.

OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN UNION CALMLY CONSIDERED.

Objection 1.—In the present existing state of society, it is right and best that Christians should be divided, and remain as they are.

Answer.—There are not a few in this day, who openly avow this sentiment, and plead for its propriety. If we judge the sentiment by the Bible, as the standard, there are none, it is hoped, so blind but must see it condemned in almost every page. It is a true maxim, that *a kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand;* and it is universally admitted, that the glory and strength of any kingdom consist in union. So the kingdom of God. The man, who pleads for disunion, is laboring to make void the commandment of God, who solemnly enjoins the contrary upon his people—he pleads against the prayer of Jesus being answered, who fervently prayed that believers might *all be one*, that the world might believe that the Father had sent him—he pleads against the spirit of true piety, which ardently breathes as well as prays for union—he pleads for that, which is pleasing to the prince of darkness, who has ever found it his interest to divide the Church of God—he pleads for what subserves the interests of partyism; for his pleas, like opiates, lull the people to sleep, and to indifference to the truth of God, the glory of Zion, and the salvation of men:—in a word, the man, who pleads for the propriety of disunion, pleads for iniquity. To contend that it is right, is an impeachment of infinite wisdom—a condemnation of the Messiah's prayer, and a deadly blow aimed at the very spirit of piety. However well the sentiment may comport with the spirit of partyism, it is humbly hoped, that obedient, living Christians, of every name,

will frown it from existence, and prove by their conduct, that it is the offspring of error, and ignorance of true piety.

Obj. 2.—Another objection often made, is, that however right the principle of Christians uniting may be, yet the various sects are not yet prepared; the time is not yet arrived, when this desirable event shall take place. The Lord will effect it, when he shall judge it proper to be done.

Ans.—This objection is similar to what we frequently hear from the careless part of mankind, when urged to seek and obtain religion. We cannot, say they, get religion till God's time come; we are not yet prepared. Surely every faithful Christian would reply to such—NOW is God's time—NOW it is your duty to believe and obey him, and in the use of these means you shall be saved. In the same manner we would answer the objector to Christian union. NOW is God's time—NOW it is right for all to believe and obey God, and the work, the desirable work, shall be done. Do we think that this work shall be effected by miracles, or by any other means than those ordained by infinite wisdom? And can any doubt that these means are faith, and humble obedience to the word of God? When shall we be better prepared to believe and obey than we are *now?* Can we think that by continuing in unbelief and disobedience, is the way to obtain faith and obedience? This is contrary to reason and experience; for sin grows by indulgence in the fruitful soil of indolence. The question should be, Is it right for Christians to be united according to the scriptures? If so, the opposite must be *wrong.* Can a Christian feel justified in living in *a known error* one moment? Can such conduct be pleasing to God? Is not the way of *right* plainly marked by infinite wisdom, and shall we make objections to walking in it? Let Christians seriously think of these things; and when convinced of their past impropriety, let them immediately reform.

Obj. 3.—It is commonly objected, that the multitude of errors in doctrine, existing among the various sects,

forbids their union and communion, and must keep them divided, while these errors remain.

Ans.—This, at the first view, is the most formidable objection made against the doctrine for which we plead; but by a little attention, we shall see it founded on error, and its discouraging appearance will evaporate, as a dark mist before the rising sun. All Christians believe, that the Bible is God's revelation to the world, and contains all the truth necessary for us to know in order to obtain eternal life. From the beginning, various opinions have been formed of many of these truths. This is a liberty, which could never be denied to any man, without denying the liberty of thinking at all. This cannot easily be done; and every attempt to do it is an attempt to enslave the mind. How differently did the Christians think on many subjects, even in Apostolic times? Yet how far were the Apostles from making this diversity of opinions a term of fellowship among humble Christians! On the contrary, they exhort them *to forbear one another, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, till we all come in the unity of the faith.*—Eph. iv. 3, 13. In those days there were but few terms of communion among Christians. All were admitted to fellowship, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and obeyed him; and their obedience was considered the best evidence of their faith. This was the lesson taught them by their Lord, who said, *By their works shall ye know them;* and *Whose doeth the will of my Father, the same is my brother, my sister, and my mother.* If opinions of truth were to be made terms of fellowship, it is much questioned whether any two men on earth could so perfectly agree in all points, as ever to unite; there would be no end of terms—there could be no union or fellowship on earth.

It is now granted by all parties, that every wrong opinion of truth, not absolutely essential, should not be made a term of fellowship; but it is contended, that there are some doctrines essential to salvation, and that errors in opinion respecting them, ought to exclude those who hold them from the union and fellowship of

Christians. We grant that any opinion, which may have such an influence on the heart of any man, as to lead him to immorality and disobedience to the gospel—to the neglect of his duty to God, and to his neighbor, or to the subversion of plain, fundamental truth, ought certainly to be reprobated, and he that holds such an opinion should be rejected from Christian fellowship; because his works prove him to be a *heretic, knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*—Titus III. 11.—A few particulars we will adduce for illustration. It is a fundamental truth, that there is a Father and a son; but any opinion that leads to the denial of them, John declares to be anti-Christian; *He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.*—1 John, II. 22. It is a fundamental truth, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; but any opinion of this truth that leads to the denial of it, is fatal: *Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?—Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.* 1 John, II. 22, 23. It is a fundamental truth, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh; but any opinion which contradicts this, is declared to be of Antichrist: *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of Antichrist.* 1 John, I. 3. It is also a fundamental truth, that Jesus Christ died, was buried, and rose again from the dead; whatever opinion, therefore, goes to contradict these facts, goes to prove the Apostles false witnesses; for they all testified that he did rise from the dead—and if they are false witnesses, our faith in their testimony, which is the whole New Testament, is vain, and all are yet in our sins. 1 Cor. XV. Another fundamental truth is, that we must believe in Jesus Christ and obey him, in order to obtain salvation and eternal life; if any opinion leads to disannul this truth, it must be in direct opposition to God's appointed method of salvation, and therefore brings ruin upon the person who receives it, and is so influenced by it as to act in accordance with it.

In these particulars, we presume all Christians agree; and we are happy to find that the terms of Christian un-

ion and fellowship are considerably diminished in number. Such has been the *mania* for uniformity of doctrines, that almost every diversity of opinion, even on points of minor importance, has been reckoned a sufficient reason to exclude an humble believer from fellowship and union with his fellow-christians. But of late, in this day of free inquiry, the frowns of truth, and the blush of piety at such intolerance, have banished a great many of them from the churches. A few yet remain, but await the same fate, and are fast approaching their end. These may be reduced to three, which are *the orthodox* notions of Trinity—the Son of God—and atonement. These are now generally called the fundamentals of religion—the doctrines which distinguish Christianity from infidelity.

1. We shall begin with Trinity, and inquire whether this doctrine is fundamental, or whether the notions formed of it ought to be terms of communion among Christians. The *orthodox* notion of Trinity seems to be this: *that there are three persons in the same one Being, substance, or nature, which Being is God.* We have honestly searched for this doctrine in the Bible, but we have never found it there. We have searched for it in the first ages of the church, but are constrained to believe that it was unknown to the Christians till about the time of the Nicene Council, in the year of our Lord 325. Before that period, the church believed in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; but the obligation to believe that *these three* were the same one Being, or substance, or God, was never imposed upon it, and therefore this doctrine could not have been then a term of fellowship.

The doctrine, that the Father and the Son are the same one substance, was the point on which the church at first divided, and on which that division is yet perpetuated. Happy would it have been for the church, had Alexander and Arius have slept with their fathers, before they had ever introduced this useless and mischievous controversy. Happy would have been the church, had their notions and speculations have died with them, and never more revived. Happy would she have been

had she never attached such importance to them, as to make them terms of union and communion. Ever since that unhappy period, there have been, and still are so many speculations afloat on this doctrine, and Trinitarians themselves so much divided in their notions, that it is impossible to ascertain the tangible point, which may be called *orthodoxy*. Some, thinking it humility to discard reason from religion, content themselves with believing in *three persons* in the one Godhead, without attaching any ideas to the doctrine, calling it an incomprehensible mystery. Others contend that there are *three intelligent persons*, or conscious agents, in the one divine essence, or Being, God. Others reject this as tritheism, and contend that *these three*, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, are *three distinctions*, or *three modes*, or *three relations*, or *three perfections*, or *three somewhats*, existing in the one God; which distinctions they do not profess to understand, but which must be so defined as to exclude the idea of three distinct Gods, or three distinct spirits, or three distinct minds. However jarring and discordant their notions may be, and whatever ideas their language may communicate; yet it is believed, that none have affirmed or contended, that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, are three distinct, intelligent Spirits; but all affirm that God is one intelligent Spirit—none have contended that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three distinct, intelligent minds, but all agree that God is one infinite, intelligent mind. Why then this endless controversy about unintelligible language and notions?

It is impossible that all these discrepant notions can be right. Let either of them be taken as the standard of *orthodoxy*, then, judged by it, all the others must be condemned. If the doctrine of Trinity be an incomprehensible mystery, it cannot be understood by any. How then can we judge others by it? Had I a standard to judge of weights and measures, of which standard I was perfectly ignorant, how could I judge and determine by it? Just as well as by a standard of doctrine of which I was ignorant.

Suppose an *orthodox* ecclesiastical court were in ses-

sion, to examine candidates for fellowship and union, with regard to their faith in the doctrine of Trinity. A follower of the pious Richard Baxter professess his faith; I believe, says he, that there are three persons in the one God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; but I do not understand three intelligent persons, spirits nor minds; but *three* perfections personified, as power, wisdom and love. Power representing the Father, Wisdom the Son, and Love the Holy Spirit. The court might say, your definition of three persons is not *orthodox*. Pray, sirs, says the candidate, what is the *orthodox* notion of the three persons? They cannot tell; for language is too poor to express it. If they cannot define their own language, and terms, how can the candidate know what to believe as right? And must not their condemnation of him be unreasonable, and entirely arbitrary.

Another candidate advances, and says, I believe in the Trinity, not of persons, but *of three personal distinctions*, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; by these distinctions, I do not understand three proper persons, nor three distinct spirits or minds, but three undefinable *somewhats*. Would the court receive this as orthodox? If they did, then they might receive every one, who professes faith in Trinity, with or without any explanation. Indeed, it appears that the word *trinity* is the watch word of *orthodoxy*, which permits men to pass the guards unmolested. If the Baxterian and Andover Trinitarians can pass the ordeal of an *orthodox* court, and be admitted to communion and union with the saints, why do they reject Unitarians, who are far from disbelieving that the *three* perfections, Power, Wisdom and Love, exist in the one God, but most assuredly believe it? and who also admit, that not only three *distinctions* may exist in the one God, but scores may exist in him unknown to us? If this court were to judge by the letter of the Confession of Faith, it is believed, that but very few would be found orthodox in the world; for how few now believe, that the Son was eternally begotten of the Father! To make the notions of men on this doctrine terms of union, we think unwarranted by the word of,

God, and calculated to strengthen the spirit of opposition towards one another. Nor are we alone in this opinion; for it is well known, that these discordant notions are commonly found in the same sect of Christians, and yet are they tolerated. But why they are tolerated by one sect among themselves, and not to others of a different name, is a question we do not undertake to solve.

2. We shall next enquire, whether the *orthodox* notions of the Son of God should be considered so essential as to justify the exclusion of all who do not receive them. On this subject, there has been more speculation than on any other in Theology; and these speculations have excited more bad feelings, and have produced more mischief in society, than can be well conceived. The *orthodox* notions appear to be, that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, and eternally begotten of God, and yet is himself the only true God; that in time he became man or was united to a perfect man in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, and suffered and died for us; that these two persons, very God and very man, were but one person, *without conversion, composition, or confusion;* that the two natures, divinity and humanity, were inseparably united, never to be divided.

These things appear to us the wildest speculations ever invented by man—we say, *by man*, because we cannot find such doctrines taught in the Bible; to us they appear to be self-contradictory. From the Apostolic days to the noted Council of Nice, these doctrines were unknown among Christians; in fact, the opposite to them were taught in all the churches. This we have already evinced in our Letters to Dr. James Blythe. Many of the *orthodox*, so reputed, are now rejecting these notions from a full conviction that they are not Bible-doctrines. It appears to us impossible for such apparent contradictions long to bear the increasing light of gospel truth. We think that all Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the only begotten Son of God, God's *own* Son, his *Prototokos*, or the one born before every creature—who came down from heaven, not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him—who was

sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world—who took flesh and blood such as the children had, a body which God had prepared for him by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary—who was born of her and tabernacled among us—whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost, or put his Spirit upon him, the spirit of understanding, of might, of wisdom and knowledge—who received this spirit without measure, or in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, because it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell—that he died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried and rose again from the dead the third day, and was received up into glory, the glory he had with the Father before the world was—who sat down at the right hand of God, and ever liveth to make intercession for us—who will come again to judge the world in righteousness, and assign to all men their eternal portions. In this faith, all Christians can surely agree; for this must be confessed to be the doctrine of God, and surely none will deny this to be sufficient for salvation.

Those speculations before noticed, we are persuaded, the majority of professors of religion reject, or do not believe. It was once deemed by the *orthodox*, a heresy of a blasphemous and damnable nature, to deny that Christ was the eternal Son of God.* Now, by many of the same class, this opinion is considered as absurd and foolish; the celebrated Dr. Clarke, professor Stewart, and others, taking the lead. It is feared, that their system will ultimate in a something as far below the truth as the other is above it. The fact, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, is believed by all Christians of every name; and if they prove their faith by their good works, their peculiar notions of his person should not be made terms of fellowship and union.

A person is sick, and apparently nigh to death. Two friends visit him. One of them urges him to apply to a certain physician, who never fails to cure the most ob-

*See Brown's Dictionary Bible—article, Christ.

stinate disease. The friend expatiates largely upon his lovely character, as embracing all the virtues and graces of man. He tells of his noble birth of royal blood, born in a foreign land, and educated in the most celebrated college in the world. The other friend also, in a pressing manner, recommends to the sick man this physician. He assures him that he can and will cure him, if he will apply to him. He also dwells largely on his amiable character, in order to engage the sick man to send for him. But, says he, my friend has not given you a true representation of this physician's person, though he has truly delineated his character, power and skill. He is not of royal blood, nor was he born in a foreign land, nor educated in a college. His parentage is low, he was born in America, and his literary acquirements are very moderate. The two friends enter into a warm, spirited and angry debate, respecting their different opinions of the physician's person; each urging the sick man to believe his notions of the physician as correct, and essential to his cure. The sick man attends to their debates till his mind becomes confused. At length he speaks: my friends, while you dispute I am dying. You both agree in the main point, that this amiable person is able and willing to cure me, and save me from death. On your recommendation, I will apply to him. He applies, and is cured. Now will these two friends deny that the man is cured by the physician, because he might not have received the peculiar notions of either? Must not each yield to the fact, that the man is cured? Shall this man be rejected from their house and society, because he had not believed their particular opinions? Surely not.

The application is easy. Do not all Christians recommend the Son of God as the most lovely character, and as a willing and able Savior? Do not all love him and obey him, and acknowledge him their Savior? Why then should they dispute and divide about their peculiar notions of his person? Poor Joseph knew nothing more than that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners—he knew he was a sinner—he trusted in Jesus

and was saved. How many poor Africans and children are blessed with salvation, who know not the meaning of the terms, which agitate and divide the learned! Shall such be rejected because they cannot pronounce *Shibboleth?* We think not. Such are commonly found, and prove that these notions are not essential to salvation, and therefore should not be made terms of communion.

Another doctrine, considered of vital importance in religion, is the *orthodox* notion of *atonement*. This notion is, that Jesus Christ died to make a *proper, full*, and *complete satisfaction* to law and justice in the room of the guilty, and that this satisfaction is accounted to them for justification. This notion has long been deemed so sacred, that to deny it has been reckoned a crime of such magnitude, as to exclude from the church the person who dared it. This appears to us strange and unwarrantable; because whatever is not plainly taught in the Bible, should not be made a term of union and communion. Dr. Murdock, a learned, patristical investigator, and a Presbyterian professor in the theological school at Andover, has lately published that this notion of Atonement was never known in the church, till invented by Anselm, a Roman Catholic priest, in the eleventh century. This notion was received and improved by the Reformers, Luther and Calvin; and has been handed down to the present age, and received as the truth of God, as a fundamental truth—the *sine qua non* of religion.

The *orthodox* themselves have been much divided on the question, *For whom did Christ die?* The Calvinists affirming for a part only of mankind; the Arminians for all. On this point these two parties have waged an ecclesiastical war for many years. The Arminians have at one time driven the Calvinists to the frozen regions of partial love, sovereign, eternal and unconditional election and reprobation. The Calvinists in turn have driven the Arminians to the burning regions of hell to save from its flames all the race of Adam; alledging if Christ died for all, and made perfect satisfaction for all their sins, both original and actual, then hell could not hold

them. The contest has been hot, and the combatant greatly irritated against each other. All who were enlisted in each party, of every age and sex, were taught to wield the sword, and to regard the opposite party as enemies. Union and fellowship between them appeared to be infinitely distant. But we are happy to find, that this excitement has considerably abated. It is evident that the Arminians have so far obtained the victory, that the Calvinists generally have come to a parley, and have so modified and explained the doctrine, that an amalgamation is fast taking place between them. We do not wish to be understood, that they have modified this doctrine in their Constitutions or Confessions of Faith, for it stands unaltered there; but in their public and private communications. This, by some, may be considered an uncharitable insinuation against their honesty. It is not designed as such; but the fact, above stated, cannot be denied. It shews that such Confessions of Faith are not in high repute among them, and will soon be abandoned as galling yokes, and trammels on the conscience.

Many of the orthodox in the present day are brought seriously to doubt their former definition of atonement, as meaning satisfaction to law and justice. For they thus reason—if Christ made satisfaction for a part only, then of course salvation is not for all; how then can they preach the gospel of salvation to all?—How can they call upon all to believe in Christ, as their Savior?—How can the reprobate be guilty for not believing?—How can he be judged, &c.? They justly reason, if Christ made a perfect satisfaction for all, then must all be saved.—These inquiries have greatly puzzled and perplexed them. To us they appear evidently receding from the old system, and are about to settle on Bishop M'Gee's theory; which is that the sacrifice of Christ, is the means devised by infinite wisdom, through which he can shew mercy to the guilty; but how this means may operate to this effect, he knows not, nor is concerned to know. If by this they mean that by the death of Christ *something* is done, by which God can shew mercy to sinners consis-

tently with his law, justice and government; surely had that *something* been necessary for us to know, in order to our salvation, he would have revealed it. That unrevealed *something* ought to have been by us left among the secret things of God, which do not belong to us. But vain man would be wise above what is written. They have racked their minds to find out this *something*. Some have said, it is that which has made God placable, others that it is that by which the demands of law and justice against the sinner are satisfied, &c. These notions have been made terms of communion, by which much mischief and disorder have been produced in the Church. All agree that the sacrifice of Christ is the means of our reconciliation to God—of the cleansing, purging, sanctifying, and washing us from sin—of putting away sin, &c. These are clearly revealed. But whether this sacrifice has the effects on God as stated by some, is doubted by many, who think such notions not contained in the Bible. This may be the subject of future discussion. John, the evangelist wrote a book, and said in the conclusion of it, "*These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.*" He thought enough had been written in that book for faith and eternal life. But it is evident that the *orthodox* notions of atonement are not found in it. Therefore they were not thought by John essential; and should not be considered so necessary as to justify the excommunication of christians.

With much pleasure and profit, we have lately perused a work recently published, entitled, "An apology for withdrawing from the Methodist Episcopal Church." by J. & J. Gregg, of Indiana. They have taken a bold, firm and dignified stand, in defence of Christian liberty. They have with a masterly hand pourtrayed the evils of human creeds, and ecclesiastical establishments in religion, and advocated the propriety of taking the Bible alone, the faith once delivered to the Saints, as the only rule of faith, practice and discipline. They have exhib-

ited partyism in its odious form, and have earnestly contended for the union of Christians. They have rejected party names, and received the name *Christian*, as that given by divine authority. We are sorry that the work is not more widely circulated. We should be glad to see it in every family. It deals not out invective, nor evades truth by flattery nor guile. A Christian spirit is constantly maintained. For the satisfaction of our readers, we will give a few extracts from the work.

After having introduced themselves to the notice of the religious public, they say—

"In the fear of the Lord we wish men of integrity and piety well, of every name and order of professing Christians; and that light, love and union, may increase and prevail, until partyism and divisions shall be universally exterminated, and harmony, love and fellowship, again be restored to the Church of Christ. We believe every Christian, of every name and order, sincerely prays and longs for this; and for this, the great Redeemer prayed —and not in vain. *Neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they* ALL *may be* ONE, *that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* And for the accomplishment of this glorious object, we ardently long, labor and pray. We do not wish to promote divisions; which, oh! to the grief of every loving Christian, are already too numerous. Neither do we wish to weaken those slender ties, that but too feebly bind the disciples of Christ together. But partyism and divisions do exist, to the shame and confusion of the professing world; and there must be *a cause. Remove* the cause, and the *effect* will cease. And until this is done, in vain may we pray for, or expect Christian union; and until primitive union and order are restored to the mangled and dissected, militant body of Christ, in vain may we expect the general success of the gospel, the conversion of the nations, or a millenium. To but little effect may we spend our strength, waste our time, and throw away our substance in trying to effect the reunion of the Church, the re-establishment of primitive Christianity, in its purity, attended with all glorious con-

sequences, while we are zealously supporting and building up those modern sectarian churches, or human establishments, which are the very fortesses or bulwarks of partyism. In short, while aiding and building up with all our might, the different sectarian establishments, in order to effect the extirpation of partyism!—praying, fervently praying, that Christian love and union might universally abound, and at the same time by our wealth, our power and tongues, zealously supporting and building up those sectarian barriers, the grand cause of divisions and uncharitableness!! And however disingenuous and pernicious such a course of conduct may be, it is, notwithstanding, the prevailing policy of the day. The dominant clergy of every ecclesiastical hierarchy, or sectarian establishment, appear more solicitous about securing or enhancing their authority and influence over their dependencies, than about rectifying the many abuses, introduced by legislative innovations and clerical domination, and restoring again the primitive order of Christian doctrine and discipline, faith and practice, and hence the re-union of the Church; and are much more willing to insinuate their very near approximation to infallibility, than to hazard a doubt respecting the legality of their towering assumptions, or self-created domination over the Church of Christ; and apparently are far less zealous in teaching their disciples properly to appreciate their social and inalienable rights, of free investigation, sober and diligent enquiry after truth as taught in the sacred oracles, and to reject and discard all human explanation, glosses, dogmas, canons, rules, disciplines and articles as authoritative, and found their faith upon nothing short of evidence, infallible truth; than they are in teaching the infallibility of their own abstract speculations, dogmas, &c. and requiring by ecclesisastical authority, implicit faith in their abstract opinion, and passive obedience to their merely self-created authority, and hence promote credulity, mental slavery, calculated to degrade rational free agents to a state of moral wretchedness. But in spite of the general reigning influence of the clergy, there are hundreds of men of

ble spirits, and independent principles, undismayed by the menacing threats of self-created rulers, and unbroken by human power, whose philanthropic, catholic souls ardently long to see primitive order restored; the faith, the worship, the discipline of the numerous churches planted by the Apostles, and organized by unerring wisdom, and hence the Church of Christ again united, keeping the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace: and partyism, the master-piece of satanic policy, entirely rooted up, and purged out of the Christian Church. To shed a ray of light, if possible, on the path by which Christians may arrive at that glorious state—a path deeply shaded by human systems, and awfully haunted by ecclesiastical demons, who fiercely assail, at every step, the lonely traveller that would walk therein—is the principal object of the publication of these papers. With such, the grand, the solemn enquiry is, what is the *cause* of the *divisions* that exist, with their various, complicated, concomitant evils? And is there any possible REMEDY?

"In examining this important subject, it is necessary to advert back to the history of primitive times, when Christianity was planted in its purity, and trace the cause, or causes, that introduced the floods of error, that have since obscured or defaced the effulgent glory, that originally attended the simple, harmonious system of evangelical religion. This we have done, and are fully satisfied that any candid, unprejudiced person, who will carefully examine his New Testament, and then mark the divine simplicity of the primitive order of Church Government, the equality of privileges, and mutual enjoyment of equal rights, by every member of each Church, and the purity of the system of doctrine taught by the Apostles, and compare the corresponding accounts given by ecclesiastical historians, need not remain any longer ignorant of the principal cause that gave rise to, and has ever since fomented strife and divisions among Christians; and will continue so to do, until removed.

"This was nothing less than a Diotrephesian spirit; a

which Paul particularly and solemnly warned the Elders of the Church of Ephesus. Designing, ambitious men, began gradually to depart from the humility and simplicity taught by the Apostles, and became dissatisfied with those humble, cross-bearing stations, to which Jesus Christ had called them, and by degrees to climb into power, and assume a superiority over their brethren, until they had completely wrested from them their original rights, trampled on their privileges, and established themselves a superior order. According to Mosheim, it was not sooner than the middle of the second century, when the clergy began very generally to combine together, to meet together in councils, &c. That they cast off the most important restraint of the people, viz: the authority that each Christian assembly, or church, originally was vested with, of choosing, trying and expelling its own Teachers; and hence introduced that destructive change in the order of Church Government, that in succeeding ages produced the ghostly power of the clergy—popish supremacy, or anti-christian oppression, with all its horrid consequences. For when once the power of administering discipline, restraining the ambitious, and guarding against oppression, was wrested from the people, and lodged in the hands of the clergy, the great fundamental barrier against encroachment and innovations, was torn away, and the aspiring, ambitious clergy soon made merchandize of the innocent, defenceless flock of Christ. The lordly, domineering priesthood, not satisfied with trampling on the social, inalienable rights of the people, began violently to contend among themselves for the supremacy; and to crown the climax of clerical arrogance, at length boldly assumed, not only the high prerogative of legislating for the Church, independent of the people, but moreover, of defining more fully the Christian faith, of giving articles of faith equally binding or authoritative as the sacred word. Hence the origin of those swarms of creeds and confessions, which have ever since deluged the world in confusion and darkness; which are all founded upon an anti-christian assumption, which is the very germ of

Popery; and which directly presupposes, or calls in question, the perfection of the grand constitution, canon, or the covenant given by unerring wisdom, without clerical legislation.

This doctrine of human legislation, was the grand floodgate through which error has poured forth its inundating streams, and deluged the Church in confusion, persecution, divisions and strife, and has superseded or supported the only standard given by King Jesus, subverted his authority, and introduced the reign of the man of sin, emphatically the reign of ANTICHRIST.

"Thus, by the aid of sacred and ecclesiastical history, we have arrived at the grand cause that first gave rise to, and still is the parent of divisions in the Church of Christ. Hence the remedy is plain; curtail or retrench the unscriptural, self-created, tyrannical authority of the dominant clergy, and disannul all their illegitimate, spurious trash, commandments of men, which, says an Apostle, turn from the truth. Their Popish idols, creeds and confessions, which enslave the consciences of Christ's disciples, and thus prostrate their different sectarian, human establishments, in the dust. Erect the infallible—*infallible* rule of faith and practice. Organize every worshipping assembly upon primitive principles; let each be constituted a church with the full power of self-government, independent of any foreign jurisdiction, but vested with the supreme power to execute no other laws except the laws of Christ, and thus reinstate every disciple of Christ to his inalienable, social and Christian rights; thus reduce religion or Christianity to its original simplicity and purity, and thus again let Christ be crowned the sole Head of his Church, and King in Zion, and sweet, social concord, harmony, love and union will again be restored to the mangled, bleeding body of Christ—and not before."

They then enter upon the examination of the Constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Their arguments to prove it not of divine authority, justly claim attention. If they be not correct, we should be glad to see an exposure of their incorrectness, done by some

person of talent, and in a plain, Christian style. They also glance at a few doctrines of their Discipline, as the following:

"We have yet to be convinced that there is a preacher in the Methodist Church of any considerable strength of intellect, who has examined the subject, that believes the two first articles of the Discipline. Can any man possibly believe two or three downright self-contradictory propositions? Can he believe that in God there are three *eternal* persons, and each person a very and eternal God, and yet but one God!! Can he believe that the Son, the second person—the very and eternal God, suffered death upon the cross—does not the second article plainly assert it? Can it possibly be believed, that uninspired men could clothe in better language, and compress into two or three short articles a better explanation, one more definite, plain and comprehensive, of this tremendous, unsearchable subject, than that given by divine wisdom? Is it as good? If it is not, why make it the very standard of orthodoxy?

"Those human standards, constitutions, creeds, covenants, articles, disciplines, rules and laws, which are all predicated upon the inadequacy or imperfection of the Perfect Standard given by Jesus Christ, and all derive their existence from the same principles, are the very essence of partyism—of the divisions and schisms, that now disgrace Christianity. And however zealous good men may be to support them, and plead for their utility, they are thereby pleading that the will of heaven, the intercessory prayer of Jesus Christ, may never be fulfilled; that divisions may continue, and the Church never arrive at that perfect unity, for which the Savior prayed."

We would gladly transcribe a few more pages of this work into ours, but the want of room forbids us. We earnestly recommend the work to our readers, as highly worthy of their attention.

We have seen a letter, written by Elder George A. Patterson, the clerk of Deer Creek Christian Confer-

ence, in Ohio, to the Editor of the Gospel Luminary. He was authorized by the Conference to make the communication. The Elders present were—Geo. Alkire, James Burbridge, Samuel Wilson, Enoch Harvey, Daniel Long, Alexander Owen, Isaac N. Walter, Martin Baker, Joseph Thomas, Joseph Baker, Geo. Zimmerman, Samuel Rogers, Benjamin Breton, Matthew Gardner, Geo. A. Patterson, James Baker and Isaac Kade. The unordained preachers were—Zarah Curtiss, Wm. Dickerson and Isaac Hornback.

The Conference was holden at Williamsport, the 18th of August last. The multitude of people that attended, was very great, and a good number was hopefully converted to the Lord. Brother Patterson states, that "On Saturday, the Conference assembled to consult on the best means for promoting the general good of the cause, and for assisting preachers willing to preach. Such unity prevailed as is seldom witnessed among so many from different parts of the country. The cause of God was superlatively the theme, while personal interest and feeling were sacrificed upon the altar of duty. Not one discordant sound was heard; not a murmur or complaint. The cause of Zion seemed near the hearts of all present. After making the necessary arrangements for supplying circuits and large meetings, we repaired to the stand."

As there is considerable excitement in the public mind respecting Mr. Owen's society in the west, we have transferred an article from the Christian Freeman into our work, on that subject, p. 251:

Robert Owen.—We have published this week a long article from the National Gazette on the principles of Mr. Owen's new system of society. We formerly gave an abstact of his system as detailed by the pretended reformer himself, and expressed approbation of its leading features, as they were then exhibited. It now appears that Mr. Owen was then feeding the American public with milk, deeming them unable to bear the strong meat of his doctrine. He has now, in his decla-

ration of mental independence, developed his system with all its odious and malignant features. We trust it is one, which to be abhorred, needs but to be exhibited, which the American people will not bear. It is founded upon the abolition of those institutions, on which alone the permanence and happiness of society depends. It is indeed a system of undisguised Atheism, and social corruption; which does not recognize even the existence, much less the providence and moral government of God, and admits none of the sanctions of religion. It proclaims religion, marriage and property the greatest evils, and thus removes every restraint upon the most unbounded and brutal licentiousness, and debauchery. It will be perceived too, by the article to which we refer, that it has not even the merit of originality, but is merely a revival, in language and with circumstances somewhat more refined, of the infidel principles of the last century. The history of the influence of those principles is full of instruction on this subject. Let this country be resolved into Mr. Owen's communities, and we should soon have fearful experience of what the French revolution, in its earliest periods, was. This is not a system to be reasoned with; for it appears to us, reason is almost perverted in those, who can see any thing fit or beautiful in it. It seems therefore to be the proper course, not to attempt to reason them out of their absurdities, but to endeavor to restore them to such a state of mind, as will enable them to perceive them. History, the order of providence, nature, their own consciousness, every thing within them and around them, contain a refutation of their principles, and teach them that without the restraints and sanctions of religion, without the influences which result from the institutions of property and domestic society, man is a mere ferocious beast, with only more extensive capacities of suffering and inflicting misery. This is fortunately a period of the world when this is not a subject of discussion, when the principle we have stated, stands among the first of moral and social axioms. They cannot be called into question with the credit of sanity or integrity, and they

who do question them are instinctively regarded as grossly corrupt, or as laboring under very strong mental delusion.

[*Extracted from John Wesley's Journal.*]

Sunday, May 18, 1788.—I subjoined a short account of Methodism; particularly insisting on the following circumstances. There is no other religious society under heaven, which requires nothing of men in order to their admission into it, but a desire to save their souls. Look all around you; you cannot be admitted into the church or society of the Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers, or any others, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The Methodists alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion, but they think and let think. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship, but you may continue to worship in your former manner, be it what it may. Now I do not know any other religious society, either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the Apostles! Here is our glorying. And a glorying peculiar to us! What society shares it with us?

EXTRACTS FROM ELIAS SMITH'S LETTER.

[From the New England Galaxy.- Boston, March 7, 1826.]

Beloved Brother H.—By a letter of yours to Br. W——, I find some questions which you wish to be answered; and he thinks it best for me to answer them, as there will (in that case) be no mistake or misunderstanding. I am ready to answer them in such a manner as to leave no doubts in your mind as to my understanding of the subjects your questions contain.

As to the final and eternal salvation of all men: after great study and prayerful search of the Scriptures, particularly the New Testament, I am satisfied that the New Testament does not teach that doctrine. It is not true, as it does not produce that effect on those who receive it, which the Apostles' doctrine produced.—Their doctrine (when received) produced a change in all who

loved it. Universalism produces no change for the better in such as receive and love it. Experience of the Apostles' doctrine will do without any thing else—Universalism will not satisfy without something else—"Christ in you the hope of glory." I do not know that there is any Universalism in me; I believe the old leaven is all purged out by the new. I believe that if you were to see and hear me, you would find me in the same doctrine and spirit as when I first preached in the ropewalk, and at the meeting-house in New-Bedford.

Almost three years ago, I renounced Universalism, publicly, in your hearing; and had all the ministers and others stood in the spirit you and some others stood in, without doubt, my mind would, before now, have progressed to where it is now; but the opposition I met with discouraged me, and I partially receded, but have never been satisfied since as before.

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Whether I may live to redeem the time, seemingly lost, is to me unknown; this I submit to the will of Heaven. Whether I shall ever find an open door among the Christian brethren, as heretofore, is unknown to me; though nothing would be more grateful to me, than for once, at least, to stand in that assembly, and once more preach that Christ which in years that are past caused so much joy to many, who now rejoice in the same Savior!

All that I have written is but a sketch of an abundance, which I must keep back for want of time and room. You are at liberty to make such use of this as you think is wisdom. I hope to see you here soon. Yours,

ELIAS SMITH.

Elder M. H.

MOTHERS.—The following is from Buckminster. "If any thing in life deserves to be considered as at once the exquisite bliss and pre-eminent duty of a mother, it is this—to watch the dawning disposition and capacity of a favorite child; to discover the earliest buds of thought; to feed with useful truth the inquisitiveness of

a young and curious mind; to direct the eyes yet unsullied with the waters of contrition, to a bounteous benefactor; to lift the little hand yet unstained with vice, in prayer to their father who is in heaven. But so it is. The child as soon as it is released from the bondage of the nurse, and needs no longer a careful eye to look after its steps, and guard it from external injury, is too often surrendered to preceptors, some of whom are employed to polish the surface of the character, and regulate the motions of the limbs, others to furnish the memory, and accomplish the imagination, while religion gets admission as she can, sometimes in aid of authority, and sometimes in a Saturday's task, or a Sunday's peculiarity, but how rarely as a sentiment. Their little hearts are made to flutter with vanity, encouraged to pant with emulation, persuaded to contract with parsimony, allowed to glow with revenge, or reduced to absolute numbness by worldliness and cares, before they have ever felt a sentiment of devotion, or beat with a pulsation of sorrow for an offence, or gratitude for a benefit, in the presence of God."

"For creeds and systems, the children of ignorance and the nurslings of authority, are doomed to mortality, like the perishable authors of their being: whilst Truth and Reason, the emanations of God himself, without the props of human institutions, will continue unimpaired as his own eternity, when the earth and the heavens shall be no more." GILBERT WAKEFIELD.

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,
AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"*Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*"—PAUL.

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Brother Stone:

As the subject of Conference is considerably agitated at present, in the religious community, on the propriety of which there is (as upon almost every other subject) a variety of opinions; and as it certainly is a matter of no small importance, I beg leave to invite your attention to the subject, with a single view of eliciting information, and ascertaining, if possible, what is propriety.

The very considerable hostility of many of our good brethren, to every convocation in the shape of Conference, together with the importance of the subject, renders it necessary that something should be said. For my own part, I have really thought that the most of the opposition to our annual meetings, from the brethren of the Christian connexion, arises from a want of correct information as to the objects of our association. For names I wish not to contend: I care not whether a religious convocation be termed Conference, Association, or Annual Meeting; but as to the propriety of the brethren occasionally meeting for religious edification, instruction, and information, from different parts of the community, within proper and limited bounds, there should exist no doubts whatever, particularly when the innocent as well as the useful objects of our meeting are ascertained.

Many are under the impression that we associate for the purpose of legislating, or making laws for the rule and government of our churches. Nothing is more foreign from our views. I acknowledge but one *law-giver*, and believe the great Head of the church has left a perfect code of laws for the government of his people;

therefore we stand not in need of human law-making, to facilitate the prosperity of the Redeemer's cause. I do most sincerely, and I hope ever shall, contend for the absolute independency of each church, as to the complete transaction of its own business; and for its want of responsibility to any human tribunal whatever. I know and acknowledge no higher tribunal than "*the church;*" and every member is alone responsible and answerable to the particular church where his membership may be. I see no authority in the word of God for the different ecclesiastical courts that have for so many centuries been established in the world, and that one set of men should, and of right ought, to be thus exalted over another. Those establishments, whose object is the elevation of one part of the religious community over, and entirely above another, must certainly fall before the light of truth.

It may then be enquired, what propriety is there in your Conference or annual meetiug? I answer, simply to worship together and strengthen the bonds of union, to receive and obtain information from the different churches, either from their letters or messengers, and attend to their suggestions, and as far as in our power comply with their requests; attend to ordination, if thought proper, when required by the brethren; to arrange our appointments so as to supply the destitute churches with preaching; and imitate the primitive church by making such *requests* only as may be proper to *set things in order*. The brethren, who meet the elders as messengers, we do not recognize as representatives. Let that principle be established, and a foundation is at once laid for the final annihilation of Christian liberty. I would therefore oppose any convocation, the object of which is to take from the churches any of their sovereign rights and prerogatives, or to legislate in any manner whatever for them, or that will maintain or uphold the doctrine, that any man or order of men are not *alone* answerable to the particular church where they may have their membership. But I am nevertheless constrained to believe that our Conferences, as they are

termed, with our present views of Christian liberty, are highly beneficial. It enables the brethren to ascertain the situation of each other, and each church; to learn the prosperity of God's cause; to meet and worship together; and to obtain a variety of information, important to be known. Surely then, none will oppose meetings, the object of which is alone information and edification, and not legislation.

I have thus succinctly made the above few remarks on the subject, more with a view of obtaining, than with an expectation of giving, information; believing that something should be said to quiet the fears of some of our brethren, who are apprehensive that something wonderfully dangerous is done in Conference; which fear alone arises, as I before intimated, from an utter misapprehension of what is done. Then let the brethren be correctly informed of our opinions on the rights, privileges, and powers of each church; the innocent and simple business of Conference; and I have no doubt their fears will be dissipated, and their hostility cease. From the long ecclesiastical tyranny that has been so unmercifully exercised over the people, I am not surprised, that by many, dangers are apprehended from religious associations, and fondly hope that the brethren will vigilantly guard against any and every thing like despotism, and be ever ready to avoid that man or set of men who may attempt to trample on their rights and liberties; while on the other hand they should cautiously avoid that utter neglect of order and propriety, which for fear of doing wrong, will incline them to neglect doing right.

Should the above remarks be worthy a place in your paper, I hope you will accompany them with such additional remarks or strictures as will edify or instruct your readers.

PHILIP.

TO PHILIP.

Dear Brother:—We thank you for your communication, and solicit a continuation of correspondence. With your remarks on the independence of the churches, and

with your views of Conferences, we are highly pleased; they meet our entire approbation. We will state a fact, which is thought to have increased the fears of some of the brethren, with regard to Conferences. It is commonly believed and confidently affirmed by some, that the mode of government practised by the Christian Church, is the same, or nearly the same, as that practised by the Baptist Church. This has considerably excited the fears of many, who think they see strong features of despotism in the Baptist government, as they do in that of others. In this we think they are not deceived; indeed some of the most respectable of the Baptists themselves acknowledge the same, and are persuaded that a reform must take place, or their churches must crumble into pieces, and ruin.

Though in some respects the features of our government and that of the Baptists bear a striking likeness, yet we would not conceal it, that there is a radical difference between them. The Baptist Association is *modestly* called an *Advisory Council;* yet it cannot be denied that their *advices* are of equal force with the authoritative decrees and cannons of *his infallible Holiness*, the Pope of Rome, and of the Catholic Councils. For if a Baptist Church refuse to receive the *advice*, given by this *advisory council*, it is cut off from the Association, and from the Baptist communion. It is acknowledged by protestants, that the authority assumed by the Roman Pontiff and his councils, to bind their decrees and dogmas upon the churches, is not divine. By what authority then do the Advisory Council make their *advices* authoritative? Can they condemn the Catholics, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, or the Methodists, for doing the same? If the authority be not divine in one case, then are all equally destitute of it. This authority we have proved in our first number to be assumed, and never granted by the great Head of the Church to poor fallible men.

We as a Conference meddle not with the government of the churches, leaving each church to act according to the New Testament. We have no other bonds of

union, than the bonds of charity and peace, and righteousness, founded on the word of God. Should our Conference ever attempt to unite the churches in one associated body, they must follow the steps of their predecessors in folly—they must assume a dictatorial authority over the churches—they must have an authoritative creed, composed of their own notions—they must thunder their bulls of excommunication against such churches as reject their authority—in a word they must act as every sect has done, which has departed from the simple plan of government, instituted by the Head of the Church, and practised by the Christians for the three first centuries after Christ.

It is objected that if the churches were left independent, to believe and act according to their understanding of the scriptures, anarchy must follow, and heresy and division prevail and annihilate the church. Does not this objection flow from unbelief and distrust in the Head of the Church. "Is there no king in thee? Is thy counsellor perished?" Has he ceased to be leader and commander to his people? Has his promise failed, that where two or three meet together in his name, there he would be in the midst? Is his hand shortened that he cannot save, and his ear heavy that he cannot hear? Is his eye no longer over the righteous? Does he not ever live to make intercession for us, or manage our affairs? Is he not a present help in time of trouble? Has he gone to heaven and ceased to be the guardian of his church on earth? Has he left it to the protection and guardianship of *his representative* and *vicegerent*, or *vicar*, the Pope, a Synod, a Conference, or an Association? Poor representatives of Christ! Let the history of the last fifteen hundred years attest what they have done to prevent heresy and division, and the establishment of the church in love, peace, and righteousness. Have they not deluged the earth with blood?— the blood of Christians!! By their vain unscriptural attempts to promote uniformity, by their authoritative creeds and councils, have they not introduced anarchy?—for what else is now presented to view in the general Church? Have they not divided

and subdivided the body of Christ into sects innumerable, and almost destroyed love and fellowship among Christians? And do not these very councils and vicars of Christ, oppose every attempt to reform? And have not the liberty of the churches been so long prostrated by them, that they kiss their fetters, and join in the persecuting spirit against the doctrine of reformation? Can such guardians be trusted any longer? No! no! no! Faith in a present Saviour as the only head, shepherd, and leader, and humble obedience to his word, as his voice, and following him as he has directed, will bring the church right, and abiding in him she shall shine forth in her primitive glory. All the laws, creeds, and digests of laws, formed by Popes, Councils, Synods, Associations, and Conferences, have never effected this, but have ever stood in the way of its being effected, and ever will stand in the way, while they exist.

With these things in view, the New covenant and its divine author should be highly prized; and all church covenants and their authors should sink from view. Let every attempt made by our Conference to form laws and rules for the government of the church, or to take the government of the churches into our hands, or to usurp authority over them—let every such attempt be frowned at indignantly by all.

We hope some of our correspondents will hereafter give you more satisfaction on this subject.

Your servant in the Lord, EDITOR.

THE CREED OF THE WALDENSES.

We subjoin the Creed of the Waldenses, from Jones' Church History, p. 325.

"We believe there is but one God, who is a spirit—the Creator of all things—the Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all; who is to be worshiped in spirit and in truth—upon whom we are continually dependent, and to whom we ascribe praise for our life, food, raiment, health, sickness, prosperity and adversity. We love him as the source of goodness, and reverence him as that sublime Being, who searcheth the reins, and trieth the hearts of the children of men.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the son and image of the Father—that in him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, and that by him alone we know the Father. He is our mediator and advocate; nor is there any other name given under heaven, by which we can be saved. In his name alone we call upon the Father, using no prayers than those contained in the holy scriptures, or such as in substance are agreeable thereunto.

3. We believe in the Holy Spirit as the Comforter, proceeding from the Father, and from the Son; by whose inspiration we are taught to pray, being by him renewed in the spirit of our minds; who creates us anew unto good works, and from whom we receive the knowledge of the truth.

4. We believe that there is one holy Church, comprising the whole assembly of the elect and faithful, that have existed from the beginning of the world, or that shall be. Of the Church the Lord Jesus Christ is the head—it is governed by his word, and guided by the Holy Spirit. For her he (Christ) prays continually, and his prayers for it are most acceptable to God, without which indeed there could be no salvation."

There are several other articles, expressive of their faith respecting the ordinances of the church, the ministry, &c. of but little interest to us, and therefore we have omitted to insert them.

These Albigences, called sometimes *paterines*, for their great sufferings and persecutions for Christ's sake, are acknowledged by Protestants to be the true Church of God, preserved by him in the great apostacy from the faith of Christ. From the simplicity of their faith respecting the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they, no doubt, were accused by their enemies of denying the Trinity, and were persecuted to death for it. For in the second edict of Frederic II, Emperor of the Romans, issued against them, among the many crimes alleged, he adds, "these miserable paterines, who do not believe *the eternal Trinity*, by their complicated wickedness offend against three, viz. God, their neighbour, and themselves. Against God, because they do not acknow-

edge the Son and the true faith, &c." Jones' Church History, p. 351.

Would any Church, professing this creed in the present day, escape the charge of heresy by the *orthodox?* Seeing the doctrines of trinity, and the hypostatical union of Christ are not mentioned in it; and these doctrines are by the *orthodox* considered as the fundamentals of Christianity. EDITOR.

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

Matt. xxviii, 18, 20. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

The first question that naturally arises from reading this important passage, is, What is the power given to Christ in heaven and in earth. Before we answer this we remark, that there are two Greek words, *dunamis* and *exousia*, though of very different signification, yet are translated frequently in our English Testament by the word *power*. This has caused considerable confusion to the English reader. The word *dunamis* literally signifies physical power or strength; as Matt. xxii, 29, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the *power* of God." Luke v, 17, "The *power* of the Lord was present to heal them." Acts iii, 12. "Peter answered the people, Why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own *power* or holiness, we had made this man to walk?" The word *exousia* signifies authority; as Matt. xxi, 23. The chief priests asked the Saviour, when teaching in the temple, "By what *authority* doest thou these things? and who gave thee this *authority?*" Acts ix, 14, "And here he hath *authority* from the chief priests, to bind all that call on thy name." The different significations of these two words are seen in the same verses,

Rev. xiii, 2, "And the dragon gave him his *power*, (*dunamin*), and his great *authority* (*exousian.*)" I. Cor. xv. 20. "When he shall have put down all authority (*exousian*), and power (*dunamin*).

We are now prepared to answer the enquiry, What is that *power* given to Christ. The word translated *power* in the text is *exousia*, which means *authority*. It literally should be read, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth." This language is intelligible. A minister sent by our government to a foreign court, goes with full *power* to execute the business for which he was sent. We all understand this *power* to be not *physical strength*, but *authority*. So Jesus the great ambassador, the great and only Apostle of God, comes to our world, with full *authority* to execute the important work of salvation. He has all *authority* in heaven. "Angels, principalities, and powers, are subject to him." They wait the orders of his throne, and willingly fly to execute them. He has authority over all the treasures of grace, of wisdom and knowledge, the unsearchable riches of heaven, to distribute and give them to such as obey him. Not only has he all authority in heaven, but also in earth. Thus he addresses his father; John xvii, 2, "As thou hast given *authority* (*exousian*) over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. All flesh, all the human race, the heathen and uttermost parts of the earth are under his authority. For what purpose is authority over them given him? It is, that he might give eternal life to as many as the Father had given him. As all mankind are given to him, we can unhesitatingly say, that he has authority, full authority to give to each and every one of the human family eternal life. But this authority he will execute according to his own plan, which is, that he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved—shall have everlasting life; and he that believeth not shall be damned—shall not see life. The poor lost sinner can never justly blame the Saviour, because he has not eternal life; but forever will curse his own folly for neglecting the means to obtain it.

"The son of man hath *authority* (*exousian*) on earth to forgive sins." Matt. ix, 6. This authority is also exercised by him according to his prescribed plan, *repent for the remission of sins.* His authority to forgive sins is limited to this world. It is no where said that he has authority in heaven to forgive sins, because there is no sin in that abode of bliss. It is no where said in the bible that he has authority to forgive sins in hell; but on earth only is this authority exercised. "For if ye die in your sins, where I am ye cannot come." In the end of the world he will put down all rule and all authority and be subject to the father, that God may be all in all. I. Cor. xv, 24. If all his authority is then given up, or put down, *then* his authority to forgive sins will forever cease. The wicked, impenitent part of mankind, *then* condemned, *have never forgiveness*, but must realize that, of which they were through life in danger, *eternal damnation.*

Jesus "hath authority given him to execute judgment also, because he is the son of man." John v, 27. The last act of his mediation is to adjudicate upon the world, and assign to each his everlasting portion of life or punishment.

On this authority, given by the Father to the Son, Jesus Christ, is predicated the commission to his disciples, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c. This the evangelist Mark explains by, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The gospel is the glad tidings of salvation, an epitome of which is, that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotton son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The next part of the apostles' commission is, to baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The enquiry is, who are to be baptized? We answer, all those who believe the gospel preached to them; for thus says Mark, "He that believeth, and is baptised shall be saved." It would indeed be a hard commission, binding the apostles to baptize all the nations whom they taught, or to whom they

preached the gospel; for many of those people blasphemed and opposed the gospel taught or preached to them—many were infidels and abominable in vice of every name—nor had the apostles power and authority to compel them to submit to baptism, had they been so disposed. We have never heard of such compulsion in the apostles' day; though we are not ignorant that it was used by their pretended successors; for nations have been taught by priests, and compelled by the drawn sword to be baptized, when they hated the religion, its authors, and its ministers. The apostles baptized none but such as believed and received the gospel, and voluntarily submitted to its ordinances.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. From this expression, some, who should know better, having a little learning, and a little common sense, have inferred that the language "is baptized" signifies *has been baptized*. This is done in order to induct people into the Church, who had been baptized in infancy. Were this the meaning of the commission, then must we conclude that the apostles had no commission to baptize any, seeing the nations to whom they preached the gospel were previously baptized, according to this hypothesis. By whom could they have been baptized? If baptized, were they baptized into those names of which they had never heard? It is a fact, that the apostles did baptize all that believed, and this is a sufficient refutation of the opinion.

Faith and baptism are the divinely instituted means of salvation. The apostles preached the gospel, the people believed, and were baptized; and through these means they were saved. This is the plan of heaven; but from this plan the Christian world has almost entirely departed; and has invented and practised plans subversive of that instituted by Christ. Some contend that a person must be saved, pardoned, and regenerated, and be enabled to give to the Church a satisfactory experience of having passed from death unto life, before they should be baptized. Had they, instead of Christ, given the commission to the apostles, they would thus

have ordered. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, *he that believeth and is saved, shall be baptized.*" This is mere human device, and stands in direct opposition to the plan of infinite wisdom. Is it not inverting the order of God, by putting the end, which is salvation, before the means, which is baptism?

Others more completely pervert the plan of Christ. They contend that none can believe till they are made alive or regenerated by some mysterious physical divine power, extraneous from the word, and independent of it as a means; their plan is, that the sinner is as dead as Lazarus in the grave; that God mysteriously infuses divine life into them, and regenerates and saves them; then, and not till then, they are enabled to believe—and then they are to be baptized. We cannot possibly conceive of a plan more directly in opposition to the plan of Christ than this; and had all the wisdom of the world been combined to have invented one more opposite, it could not have been done. Future generations will wonder at the ignorance and presumption of the present race of Christians. And yet nothing can turn them from their course. Had they given the Commission to the apostles, it would have been this: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to—not every creature, for they are all as dead as Lazarus, it is not for them—but preach it to such as are divinely made alive, regenerated and saved by the almighty power of God—they will and can then believe; and when they are saved and believe, then baptize them." Thus they have completely perverted the truth, and have put the end, which is salvation, before the means of salvation, which are faith and baptism. Can such men expect the smiles of God, or his plaudit, *Well done good and faithful servant?*

Others have substituted another plan, which is to baptize the subjects before they believe, and are saved. They baptize infants, which cannot believe; this they (the infants) are left to do, or not to do, at some future period of life. Why is it that all have so universally, and for so long a time, departed from Christ's plan? It cannot be that it is difficult to be understood; for noth-

ing can be plainer. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." On this plan the apostles acted. Peter preached the gospel—the Jews heard it, and believed, for faith, in those days, came by hearing—they say, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter answers, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts, 2. Had one of our *orthodox divines* been present, would he not have said, 'Peter you are wrong: these people must have the remission of their sins, and they must have the gift of the Holy Ghost, before they shall be baptized'? Would not Peter have replied, 'I was taught and commissioned thus to act, by my Lord, Jesus Christ; and, pray sir, who taught you the contrary?' What could he answer? Shame must have made him hang his head in silence.

Saul believed and was praying in agony, yet his sins cleaved fast to him. The Lord takes his own plan to save him. He sent Ananias to him, who said, "Why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and *wash away thy sins.*" Saul obeyed, and was baptized; his sins were washed away, and he saved. How would a *modern* doctor have acted in this case? Something like this would have been his language: 'Poor Saul, you are in a pitiable condition; I cannot help you; pray on; it may be you shall be heard, and God in his *own time* will send his spirit to cleanse you from your sins, and save you; after you have experienced this, I advise you to be baptized.' Oh! how different, and how far from truth!

Philip went down to Samaria. There he preached the gospel—the people believed, and were baptized, both men and women. It is not said that these men and women brought their infants to Philip, and had them baptized too, according to modern custom—a custom we hear nothing about in apostolic practice, or indeed in the commission of the Saviour. These Samaritans were baptized previous to their reception of the Holy Ghost; for this they received afterwards, when the apostles prayed for them. Philip in the mean time was sent by

the spirit after a poor distressed Ethiopian eunuch, to shew to him the way of life. He preaches to him the gospel; the eunuch believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Philip required no more, but baptized him; he received the Holy Ghost according to promise, for he *went on his way rejoicing*. Acts 8.

It will be objected, 'Ah, you make baptism a saving ordinance. I have not made it such; for I have proved that it was made so eighteen hundred years ago by the great Head of the Church, and practised as such by his inspired apostles and evangelists. But do people think the water itself, into which a believer is immersed, washes away sins? I ask, did the waters of Jordan, into which Naaman dipt himself at the command of Elisha,—did these waters literally wash away his leprosy? or was it not the power of God through this act of obedience? So baptism saves us, and washes away our sins; not the water, but the grace and power of God through this act of obedience.

It is again said, God has saved myriads of souls, who have never been baptized according to the order instituted by Christ, and therefore that order is not essential to salvation. It is granted, that from this order the institutor himself departed at first, when the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius, were filled with the Holy Ghost before they were baptized. This was necessary; for had not this been done, Peter and the Christian Jews with him, could not have been prevailed upon to baptize them, and induct them into the church. This reason they assigned for their justification before the Church in Jerusalem. But if God has long borne with our ignorance, and has shewn his saving mercy to those who have departed from his plan, shall we still presume, and continue in our error, when it is now plainly made known? If any man, like the eunuch profess to believe with all his heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and like him, apply for baptism, who dare refuse it? He is to believe with all his heart, that is, with the full determination and purpose of the heart to follow and obey him through life.

We hope to receive from our brethren communications on this important subject. Let the free spirit of the meekness and wisdom of Christ be ever exercised in all our attempts to restore the primitive order of Christ in his church. EDITOR.

COMMUNICATED.

Fayette county, Jan. 3, 1827.

Brother Stone:—As one of the objects of your paper is to diffuse religious intelligence, I have thought it proper to call your attention to the recent revival of religion in the vicinity of the Union meeting house, in this county. It is now a little upwards of three years since the Church of Christ was constituted at the place above mentioned, with but six members. From the time of its organization up to last fall, there was an occasional increase and some additions. The crowded and attentive assemblies, witnessed to all the deep regard they entertained for truth, and manifested their ardent desire for the spread of the gospel. About the first of last November, the good seed began to bring forth its fruit: the work of the Lord began in power; and twenty-two have since that time been added to the church; and the work is still going on; our meetings are yet crowdedly attended. The people of the Lord are made to rejoice: sinners are weeping and crying for mercy, and mourners obtaining comfort. Oh! that the Lord would abundantly carry on his gracious work amongst us. We have now a large church, all engaged in the work of God, and from appearances no doubt can be entertained, that many more will soon be added. Although this revival may be generally known in our land, yet by calling your attention to it, our brethren in distant lands may learn the success and march of truth, and like Paul, when he met his brethren at the three taverns, "*thank God and take courage.*" Indeed I hope the brethren in different parts of the country will avail themselves of your paper, as a medium through which they will communicate such intelligence as the above; for surely to Christians nothing can be more pleasing than to hear of

additions to the number of the faithful. While you are therefore vindicating truth and exposing error, I know it will be cheering to our brethren to hear of the effect of truth upon the minds and hearts of the people. Those who have recently been added to our church, have simply, as the book requires, professed the *one faith*, and under its influence received the *one baptism*, and are now *rejoicing on their way*. We ardently hope soon to see the *ancient order of things* restored among us, and truth having its intended effect on the hearts of mankind.

Before I close this communication, let me request you early to commence giving us a history of the rise, progress, and present standing of the Christian Church. It no doubt will be read with pleasure; and many circumstances render it necessary that it should not long be delayed. Information upon that subject is much required by our brethren; and while it will have the effect of informing the members of the church and an impartial public correctly on this important subject, it will also silence those slanderous reports, propagated by the enemies of truth, with a single view to our prejudice and injury. *A Member of the Church of Christ.*

☞ We inform our brother, and the public, that we have commenced the history of the Christian Church, which shall occupy a few pages in our subsequent numbers. EDITOR.

COMMUNICATED.

From a letter just received from Elder Samuel Kyle of Ohio, we are cheered with the information of the prosperous state of religion within his bounds. Above sixty have been lately added to the churches where he has laboured.

CHILLINGWORTH'S THOUGHTS.

"By the religion of protestants I do not understand the doctrine of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon; nor the confession of Augusta, or Geneva; nor the cate-

chism of Heidelberg; nor the articles of the Church of England; no, nor the harmony of protestant confessions, but that, wherein they all agree, and which they all subscribe with a greater harmony, as a perfect rule of their faith and actions; that is, the Bible. The Bible, I say the Bible only is the religion of protestants. Whatever else they believe besides it, and the plain, irrefragable, undeniable consequences of it, well they may hold as a matter of opinion; but as matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds, believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and *schismatical* presumption. I, for my part, after a long and (as I verily believe and hope) impartial search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock only. I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fathers of one age against a consent of Fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty but of Scripture only, for any considering man to build upon. This therefore, and this only, I have reason to believe; this I will profess; according to this I will live; and for this, if there be occasion, I will not only willingly, but gladly lose my life, though I should be sorry that Christians should take it from me. Propose me any thing out of this book, and require whether I believe it or no, and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart; as knowing no other demonstration can be stronger than this; God hath said so, therefore it is true. In other things, I will take no man's liberty of judging from him; neither shall any man take mine from me. I will think no man the worse man, nor the worse Christian; I will love no man the less for differing from me in opinion. And what measure I mete to others, I expect from them again. I am fully persuaded that God does not, and therefore that man ought not to require

any more of any man than this: to believe the scripture to be God's word, to endeavor to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it. This will be found, not only a better, but the only means to suppress heresy and restore unity. For he that believes the scripture sincerely, and endeavors to believe it in the true sense, cannot possibly be a heretic."

HALE'S DEFINITION OF HERESY.

"Heresy is an act of the will, not of reason; and is indeed a lie, not a mistake; else how could that known speech of Austin go for true: *Errare possum, hæreticus esse nolo*,—I may err, but I will not be a heretic. Indeed Manichæism, Valentinianism, Marcionism, Mahometanism, are truly and properly *heresies;* for we know that the authors of them received them not, but minted them themselves; and so knew that which they taught to be a lie."

This definition seems well to accord with that of Paul to Titus, iii, 10, 11. "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, *being condemned of himself.*" A heretic, according to Paul, is a factious person, one that foments parties, and division. Rom. xvi, 17, "Mark them that cause divisions among you contrary to the doctrine ye have learned, and avoid them." Now it is well known that the doctrine of Christ enjoins unity and leads to it. But the man, who teaches for doctrine the commandments of men, or his own opinions for truth; and makes *these* terms of Christian fellowship, and by this means creates and foments partyism and division, what is he, but a heretic?

EDITOR.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Mr. Editor:—As your paper appears to be a medium through which religious instruction is communicated, the following is respectfully submitted to your consideration. Should you think it of any utility to your readers, you may insert it in your useful Messenger.

It has been frequently stated from the pulpit, whence nothing but truth should be heard, that the law given to Adam was infinite—that the transgression of it was an infinite evil—that its penalty was infinite, and that none less than an infinite Being could fully satisfy it. These things appeared strange, passing strange, to me, who had never troubled my mind with human systems of religion, but had assiduously applied myself to learn the religion of the Bible. My attention was drawn to these subjects, which I had heard so confidently stated, and zealously preached. I searched for them in the Bible; but that book contains not one of those items, but teaches doctrine subversive of them all.

1. They say, the law is infinite. If so, the obligation was infinite. What can we conceive more unjust than to require an infinite obedience of a finite creature, as Adam was? Would not this be to require an impossibility? And what should we think of God to inflict infinite punishment upon his poor creature for not performing an impossible obedience? What should we think of an earthly father, who should command his little son to pull up a large oak from the earth, and then beat him to death for not performing it? Would not such a wretch be universally execrated as a monster in wickedness? Shall we dare impute this character to the God of infinite benevolence? Far from us be the thought! Again, if the law be infinite, then God in giving it to a finite creature, laid him under an absolute necessity to sin, and was himself the author of sin; and how could the righteous judge condemn him? Should a despotic law-giver make a law, enjoining on each of his subjects, under the severest penalties, to pay him an annuity of ten thousand talents; what could be more cruel, oppressive, and unjust? Probably not one in his empire could obey; every one by this law is laid under the fatal necessity of disobedience, and consequent punishment.

But none of the laws of heaven, given to man, are of this character. That commandment of God, on which hang all the law and the prophets, is perfectly adapted

to the capacity of man. It is to love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. Here is perfect justice; because it requires nothing more than all the heart, mind, and strength. The weak and ignorant, the strong and the wise, are required to love and serve God, according to their several abilities, and nothing more is required. To demand more would be tyrrnnical injustice. As upon this commandment hang all the law and the prophets, we may fairly conclude that the law given to Adam was not an infinite law. I have heard the advocates for an infinite law argue, that the law must be infinite, because it proceeded from an infinite God. This argument I acknowledge the most weighty I ever heard advanced in proof of the doctrine; but one moment's reflection will shew it to be light as air. We and all creation proceeded from God; are we—is all creation therefore infinite? I wait not an answer.

I proceed to the consideration of the second *item* in the chain, that the transgression of this law was an infinite evil. This is a mere deduction from the notion of the law being infinite. As the premises are proved to be false, the conclusion must bear the same character. I hesitate not to pronounce it unscriptural, unreasonable and false. If sin be an infinite evil, then it follows that every sin is infinite, and consequently there are no degrees of evil, the least sin being equally infinite as the greatest. This notion is universally condemned by the Bible. To adduce proof is deemed useless. Paul said, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Were sin infinite, how could grace be much more than infinite?

Again, they say the penalty is infinite. This is an inference from an inference, drawn from false premises. By infinite punishment, they must understand either a punishment infinite in degree or duration. If the punishment be infinite in degree, then it is plain a finite creature cannot suffer it. That law-giver must be infinitely unjust, to give a law impossible to be obeyed in its precepts and penalties. If the penalty for trans-

gression be infinite, then must infinite punishment be inflicted for the least sin, as well as for the greatest. How then can we account for such expressions as these, which we find in the Bible—of some, beaten with few stripes and others with many?—of its being more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha than the unbelieving Jews?—and of sorer punishment? These expressions convey plainly the idea of degree in punishment, and therefore destroy effectually the idea of punishment, infinite in degree. Punishment infinite in degree is certainly the idea designed by the advocates of this doctrine; for they acknowledge that Christ did not suffer an eternal punishment, but that which was equivalent, that is, a punishment infinite in degree; and this, they say, was a complete, full, and proper satisfaction to the law in its penal demands of the sinner. Hence we fairly conclude that the law-giver required this impossibility of the sinner, and that Jesus Christ did honor to a law which in itself was infinitely unjust and dishonorable. Can we possibly believe it? I think not. If by infinite punishment is meant, punishment in infinite duration, or everlasting punishment, we have no objections, for this is a scriptural truth. But we have shewn that this is not the idea intended by those, whose opinions we are examining.

The last link of the chain is, that none but an infinite being can suffer an infinite punishment, and make satisfaction to law and justice. This argument is used to establish the notion that Jesus, who suffered, was himself the infinite and true God. Surely the doctrine that Christ is the very God, must labor, when such helps as this are introduced to establish it. Is it possible that its advocates can seriously believe that the very God suffered, and died on Calvary? If they do, surely they depart from gospel light, and go into worse than pagan darkness—they depart from their own professed Creeds, which declare that God is without *passion*. The better informed among the advocates for these notions, revolt at the idea of the very God suffering and dying; yet still maintain that the penalty was infinite,

and that Jesus suffered it. But they say, nothing but humanity suffered, which was supported by divinity to suffer infinitely. By this the argument for Christ's supreme divinity is lost; for on the same principle, God could support any man to suffer as much. These are mere speculations, as infinitely distant from truth, as darkness is from light. If Jesus was supported to suffer by the very God, why did he say, "My God, my God, *why hast thou forsaken me?*" But if the law was not infinite, the transgression of it was not infinite evil, therefore the penalty was not infinite in degree, and therefore an infinite Being was not required to suffer it, in order to make a full, or an infinite satisfaction.

On the doctrine of satisfaction to law by the sacrifice of Christ, I may hereafter give you my thoughts, and I shall endeavor to prove that the doctrine is a mere device of erring man, and has no foundation on scripture.

Yours in love,

AMICUS.

FROM THE BAPTIST RECORDER.

In the variety of topics I hear discussed from the pulpit and see from the press, the subject of avarice or covetousness is seldom touched, though it is among the most pernicious crimes spoken of in the Bible. This sin is, I fear, greatly misunderstood and much overlooked by many professors; were it not, the remark would not be so often made: "Such a person is a *good Christian*, but a *covetous man;*" whereas, it might with as much propriety be said, "such a woman is a *virtuous lady* but an *infamous prostitute*," for the latter is not more contrary to sound sense, than the former is to the positive declarations of God's word. When we hear people in common, talk about covetousness, we are tempted to look upon it as a mere trifling fault; but, when we turn over the volume of heaven, we find it pronounced *idolatry*, and deemed a capital crime, while Jehovah denounces damnation against the wretch that is guilty of it. When by usury, extortion, and oppres-

sion, they grind the faces of the poor, and lay up that in their coffers, which of right belongs to the needy, who have laboured for them, the rust of which shall be a swift witness against them at another day, and shall eat their flesh as it were with fire.

Is not the gospel dishonoured? is not the church plagued by such professors? Such persons, whether more light in their dispositions and conduct, or more grave in their temper and behaviour, are like the children of the devil and the slaves of sin, and are on a level in the sight of God, with the most profane. As to the covetous, those votaries of mammon, whatever dislike they may have to their associates, they stand ranked in the book of God, with no other company, than the extortioners and thieves, drunkards and adulterers. Yes, they are branded with the most detestable character, for they are called idolators. It may be enquired, "In what then, does this aggravated sin consist?" I answer, covetousness, in the language of inspiration, is the desire of having more; the desire of obtaining or increasing in wealth. Whoever, therefore, is habitually desirous of riches, is, in the estimate of heaven, a covetous man, whatever his situation in life, and profession of religion may be. The language of the covetous heart, is that of the horseleach's daughter, give, give. The covetous man is always desirous of more, whether he has little or much, and if a professor, he will always find some pretext to hide the iniquity of his idolatrous heart. But however such a professor may cover his crime under plausible pretences of any kind, or however safe he may imagine himself, as being a member of the visible church, and free from her censure, the time is coming when the mask will be stripped off, and then shall it be known where his affections have been, and what God he has served. Then it shall plainly appear, whether Jehovah or mammon, swayed his affections and ruled in his heart. Perhaps there are but few sins for the practice of which so many excuses are urged, as that of covetousness or a love of the world; consequently, there are few sins against which professors have

greater occasion to watch. It was not therefore without reason that our Lord gave that solemn caution to all his followers: "Take heed and beware of covetousness."

B.

AGENTS FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

KENTUCKY.—Stephen G. Marshall, and Alex'r. McHatton, *Georgetown.* Benjamin Cassell, *Lexington.* Michael Rice, *Jessamine.* C. C. Moore, *Winchester.* Josiah H. Yager, *Elizabethtown.* Richard Hart, *Flemingsburg.* John Bryan, *Hopkinsville.* John Jones. *Liberty.* Andrew Henderson, *Everett's house.* Thos. Hall, *Frankfort.* Thos. M. Allen, *Union meeting-house.* H. F. Wilson, and H. Parker, *Paris.* Wm. Morrow. *Cynthiana.* Wm. Rule. *Fulmouth.* David Cassell, *Bethel.* A. Perrin, *Stanford.* Jas. Houston, *North Middletown.* Dr. A. W. Bills, *Millersburgh.* Dr. John Sanders, *New Castle.* Wm. Read and Ephraim R. Osborn, *Richmond.* James Durham, *Perryville.*

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,
AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

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ILLINOIS.—Daniel Travis, *Lawrenceville.*

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

No. I.

Towards the close of the eighteenth century, there was an unusual death in the professors of religion, throughout the western country, both among the preachers and the people. In the commencement of the present century, the more pious became seriously alarmed at the prevalence of vice and the declension of vital piety. They agreed to meet often in prayer to God to revive religion, which appeared ready to die. These meetings were frequent, and began to attract general attention. The humble Christians prayed fervently, and sang the praises of God with warm devotion. Their prayers reached the ears of the Lord; *he answered by fire;* for he poured out his spirit in a way almost miraculous. This powerful work was first experienced

in Tennessee, and in the lower parts of this state, among the Presbyterians, in the summer or fall of 1800.

At this time I had gone to Virginia and North Carolina. From Carolina I was returning to Kentucky in company with Dr. Hall, who was going on a mission to Natchez and the low countries. Never shall I forget the events that transpired on our journey. We were met by a company returning from Tennessee, who had letters to Dr. Hall. We stopped in the woods. The Doctor began to read silently; but soon cried out aloud, and burst into a flood of tears. At first we were at a loss for the cause; but soon learned from the bearer of the letters, and from the letters themselves, that which equally affected us all. It was an account of a wonderful meeting at Shiloh in Tennessee—that many had been struck down as dead, and continued for hours apparently breathless, and afterwards rose, praising God for his saving mercy—that the saints were all alive—and sinners all around weeping and crying for mercy—and that multitudes were converted and rejoicing in God.

The work spread and progressed like fire in a dry stubble. The sparks, lighting in various parts of the field, would quickly raise as many blazes all around. So the Christians from various and distant parts met together; and returning home in the spirit and power of religion, they became preachers, successful preachers, in their neighborhoods, by simply stating what they had seen, heard, and felt; and so spake that many believed and turned to the Lord. I knew an old Presbyterian in a barren neighborhood. He heard of this strange work, and went 60 or 70 miles to one of those meetings. The work was very great and strange. He felt the flame of it in his own heart, and returned home in the power of the spirit. He had a very wicked son. He went to see him, deeply impressed with the situation of his child. As soon as he saw him, he burst into a flood of tears, and cried out, O my son Reuben. The son was instantly convicted of his sins, and immediately repaired to the woods, and cried for mercy: nor did he

cease till he obtained it. He straightway began to exhort and warn his companions in wickedness to repent and believe the gospel; and many turned to the Lord. From that period to his death, about 20 years, he laboured without ceasing, in the vineyard of the Lord, and was eminently useful.

In the spring of 1801, the Lord visited his people in the north of Kentucky. In Fleming, and in Concord, one of my congregations, the same strange and mighty works were seen and experienced. On the fourth Lord's day in May, we had an appointment for a communion at Concord. Various causes collected an unusual multitude of people together at this time,—between five and six thousands, of various sects, and many preachers. The house could not contain them, and we repaired to the woods. Worship commenced on Friday, and continued without intermission day and night, for four or five days. From this meeting, the flame spread all around, and increased till the ever-memorable meeting at Caneridge, in August following. Here an innumerable multitude collected, estimated at 25,000 souls. The meeting commenced on Friday, and continued six or seven days. It was truly a solemn scene to see the multitudes coming together, and the number of wagons and carriages bringing provisions and tents to stay on the ground; for it was found that no neighborhood could entertain and support the multitudes that came together. The members of the church and the neighbours brought their provisions to the encampment, for themselves and strangers. Long tables were spread with provisions, and all invited to eat. This was the beginning and introduction of camp meetings. During this time, night and day worship continued. Hundreds were lying as men slain in battle; many engaged in prayer for the distressed in every part of the camp; many in the woods around crying for mercy; many rejoicing aloud in songs of praise. In other parts many of the preachers of various names, were proclaiming the gospel of salvation. The number of converts could never be ascertained: it is thought to have been between 500 and 1000.

The doctrine preached by all was simple, and nearly the same. Free and full salvation to every creature was proclaimed. All urged faith in the gospel, and obedience to it, as the way of life. All appeared deeply impressed with the ruined state of sinners, and were anxious for their salvation. The spirit of partyism, and party distinctions, were apparently forgotten. The doctrines of former controversy were not named; no mention was made of eternal unconditional election, reprobation, or fatality. The spirit of love, peace, and union, were revived. You might have seen the various sects engaged in the same spirit, praying, praising, and communing together, and the preachers in the lead. Happy days! joyful seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord! This work from this period spread throughout the western country.

It should not be concealed that among us Presbyterians, there were some, both of the preachers and private members, who stood in opposition to the work, and the doctrine by which it was promoted. They did not like that the doctrines of their confession should be neglected *in the daily ministration.* They therefore became jealous lest those doctrines should be entirely rejected by the churches; they began to preach them, and oppose the doctrine of the revival. The other sects began to take the alarm and to oppose the doctrine of Calvin. The war commenced; and now there appeared to be more solicitude to establish certain dogmas, and to enlist members into a particular party, than to preach the gospel, and win souls to Christ. The pious wept at the sight, and were groaning at the devastations of Zion, the breach of union, and the unhappy check put to the work of God! Never before did partyism to my mind appear so hateful, so destructive to the progress of truth and vital piety, and to the salvation of souls. Many saw it in the same light, and felt determined to stand fast in the gospel of Christ, and labour to promote his work.

But here we were not permitted to rest. We must come into the party views and party spirit of the de-

nomination by which we were called, and cease from preaching that doctrine which was considered contrary to the doctrines contained in our confession of faith, contemptuously called *arminian*. These doctrines were, that the provisions and calls of the gospel were for all, and to all the family of Adam; that Christ died for all, and was the constituted Saviour of all; that the poor sinner must believe in him, and that he was capable to believe from the evidences given in the gospel. In this strain of preaching, a number of the Presbyterian preachers had been for some time past engaged. But these by no means suited the sticklers for *orthodoxy*. Richard McNemar, a member of Washington Presbytery, was zealously engaged in preaching these views. At the session of this Presbytery in Cincinnati, Oct. 6, 1802, a *lay* elder, a member of the Presbytery, arose and entered a verbal complaint against McNemar, as a propagator of false doctrine, and desired the Presbytery to look into the matter. Though McNemar protested against this measure as disorderly, yet he was overruled, and the Presbytery, as a court of inquisition, proceeded to examine him, on the doctrine of particular election, human depravity, the atonement, the application of it to sinners, the necessity of a divine agency in the application, and the nature of faith. The result of the examination was, that his views were essentially different from Calvinism—and that his *principles were strictly Arminian*, "which, (say they) are dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion." A copy of their judgment was ordered to be sent to all the churches under their care. What appeared extraordinary is, that this same presbytery in the same session, in which they passed a vote of condemation on his principles, as dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion, appointed McNemar to preach among the vacancies, as usual, as their minutes shew.

At the next session of this Presbytery in April 1803, a petition was presented, praying Presbytery to examine McNemar on the fundamental doctrines of religion;

and that the Rev. John Thompson undergo the like examination. The Presbytery rejected the petition as improper; and presented McNemar a call from Turtle-Creek, which he accepted. The minority of Presbytery protested against these acts of the majority.

In Sept. 1803, the Synod met in Lexington. Here the books of all the Presbyteries were to be examined, and their improper conduct arraigned at the bar of this court. Through the committee of overtures, the business of the Washington Presbytery in their sessions in Cincinnati and Springfield with respect to McNemar and Thompson, was laid before the Synod. The Synod soon determined, that the Washington Presbytery acted orderly in examining McNemar, and of publishing their vote of condemnation of his principles, as dangerous, and contrary to the constitution of the Presbyterian church, and that they were disorderly in giving him appointments to preach. They also determined that the Presbytery acted disorderly in rejecting the petition to examine McNemar and Thompson at Springfield, and in presenting McNemar the call from Turtle Creek. It was now evidently seen that the way was prepared to censure any minister of the gospel without charge, witness, or prosecution, through the short medium of Presbyterial inquisition. We, who were of the same sentiments, now plainly saw that the proceedings of Synod not only involved the fate of McNemar and Thompson, but equally our own. We saw the arm of ecclesiastical authority raised to crush us, and we must either sink, or step aside to avoid the blow.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THOUGHTS ON PREACHING.

We have seen many and great improprieties in this particular among ourselves, as well as among others. To correct these is our present design, in a few of the following pages. In times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, all Christians are more or less affected with the importance of truth, and feel a deep concern for the prosperity of Zion, and for the salvation of

souls. It is a liberty granted by the Head of the Church, that all may prophecy and exhort one another. In this way parents are often successful preachers to their children, and neighbors to their neighbors. In a congregation, great and good effects have been produced by a plain, simple, and short address, made by an unlettered person, who felt the force of truth; while the learned and polished doctor may have rhetorized and philosphized the people to sleep, or to careless indifference.

There are many persons in those times of refreshing, who, feeling the worth of souls, and a great desire for the interests of Zion, are impressed with the belief that they are called to preach the gospel. Should they be possessed of correct information or knowledge, and be endowed with a capacity of communicating that knowledge to the edification of their hearers, the church should encourage such to exercise their gifts in their meetings—*in their meetings;* for such speakers should first learn at home, in the church of which they are members, before they go abroad to preach; nor should they go abroad as preachers until they are sent and recommended by the church.–II. Cor. iii. 1.–Acts xiii, 1, 4. We view it an impropriety for a person, impressed with the idea that he is divinely called to preach, to go abroad, and travel from country to country preaching, without being sent by the church with letters of commendation. Paul did it; but he was miraculously called and inspired by the Holy Spirit, as an apostle of Christ. Hence he so frequently says, that he was not sent by man to preach. This person going abroad contrary to gospel order, frequently does more injury than good to the cause of Christ. Had he believed and not have made haste, he might have become a profitable member in the church. Many have acted thus for want of information on the subject. It is hoped this hint will cause such to examine the New Testament, and that the churches as well as themselves will in future attend more closely to the order of our Head, the Lord Jesus.

We have seen with pain another impropriety amongst us. We have seen a person eminently qualified to preach the gospel with clearness, spirit, and power, confined to one particular charge or church; who before his confinement laboured extensively; and by whose labors the saints were every where revived and sinners converted. This person should not be confined to one church, but should travel among all as much as possible. For fact proves that as soon as he is confined to one place, his labours become unprofitable, and both himself and the people too frequently sink into unfruitfulness and death. On the other hand we have seen men eminently qualified with the gift of *government*, to keep and put in order the things that may be wanting in the church, yet have not the gift of preaching with profit—we have seen such men travelling and labouring extensively, when it was evident to all, they ought to labour and govern at home. In this they would be useful. That there is a diversity of gifts is evident.–Rom. xii, 6, 8.–I. Cor. xii, 28, 31, &c. Of these gifts the church is the best judge. We are grieved to see those preachers among us, who are capable of edifying the churches, generally confined at home; and those of very limited knowledge, capacity, and influence, travelling abroad. A course opposite to this is certainly correct, and ought to be pursued by us.

It is commonly objected, that by travelling and preaching abroad, the preacher would lack a support for himself and family. Nothing is more reasonable and scriptural, than that he that preaches the gospel should live by it; and if every church stood in gospel order, each would have a pastor, or overseer, and meet together every Lord's day for worship; and on that day each member would give to his deacon, as the Lord had prospered him, for the help of the needy; and who in our free country are more needy than they who devote their time to the preaching of the gospel? We fear that the objection to preaching extensively may arise from a covetous spirit, which requires more, in order to live in the style of the day. For this poor trifle, shall

souls be forever lost? Shall preachers neglect their duty? Shall they spend the Lord's day at home, doing nothing to advance the cause of God? Let them think how they will meet their judge in the great day of account.

We shall mention one more impropriety among the preachers in general, and that not the least. Many destroy their usefulness by ever preaching controversy. On a few particular subjects their attention is fixed, and on these they dwell till they are almost brought to conclude that they are the sum of truth, and the very essence of religion, and that all who reject them must be destitute of both. The doctrines of eternal election, absolute decrees, perseverance in grace, trinity, the atonement, and their opposites, have long engaged almost the sole attention of many; or if they occasionally touch on the practical points of religion, it is evidently done with a cold indifference, their zeal having been expended in the defence of their peculiar dogmas, and in handsomely drubbing and anathematizing their opponents. Such is the popular cant of many in the present day, and this, though unprofitable, is the popular preaching of this time. This fault is chiefly found among the younger class of preachers, the old having learned by good sense and experience the inutility and folly of such labours, and that the hearts of the preachers and hearers are left barren of devotion, communion with God, and brotherly love, after such addresses. Let such carping controversialists ask themselves, if what they preach to others, is living food to their own souls? If not, how can they expect to feed the sheep, and cause them to thrive? Does not such preaching destroy brotherly love and Christian union, and therefore must be a serious injury to society? To declare plainly our views on controverted points at proper times and places, is certainly proper; but wisdom should regulate, and moderation and meekness should ever be manifested.

The attention of the churches and preachers is earnestly invited to this subject; and as we expect to meet in conference shortly, we request communications on

this subject from brethren who have made it their study. EDITOR.

☞Our annual conference will be on Friday before the first Lord's day in April next, at Upper Indian Creek meeting house, near Cynthiana, Harrison county, Kentucky.

We have lately read a piece in the Western Luminary, entitled *The Trinity*.—Vol. III, No. 28. We have yet to learn what the writer had in view in publishing this to the world. It could not be for the conviction of the anti-trinitarian, nor for the establishment of the trinitarian; for the arguments used are presumptive, and not calculated for either conviction or establishment. We cannot but view it as a beacon of alarm, raised up to excite the fears of the weak, and to inflame their angry passions against their fellow creatures, who may be as acceptable to their God as themselves. The writer appears to have forgotten a solemn precept of Jesus: *Judge not, that ye be not judged.* To us the piece under review, is a perfect exhibition of the intolerant spirit of the fourth century, by which piety, peace, love, and union, were almost driven from the church.

In the first paragraph the writer expresses his opinion that Unitarianism (by which term he understands *Socinianism*) is the most dangerous of doctrines, with regard to the Christian religion. We shall not contend with him as to the degree of danger attached to this doctrine; for with him we agree in rejecting the doctrine as "inconsistent with the simple and plain declarations of the Bible. But we fear to judge, as he has done, that it assumes a ground or station, which is entirely repugnant to the experience of every child of God." We think there is a numerous and growing class of Socinians in the present day, who disseminate the doctrine under the cloak of orthodoxy. For how many nominal trinitarians at this time, deny the pre-existence of the Son of God, and affirm that the *Logos*

or *Word, which was made flesh*, was not a distinct mind, or spirit, or intelligent being, but was the only true God himself. What then but *man* was born, grew up, lived, and died? The professed Socinians are no doubt, highly pleased with this change of professed trinitarians, and look forward with pleasure to the period when a union between them shall be effected.

In the second paragraph, the writer says: "If our Saviour in his essential character, was not God—the eternal being—the creator of the universe—the creator of all things, whether in heaven or on earth, he was the greatest impostor the world ever saw." But on the supposition, the Saviour never assumed one of these characters to himself, what then? Could he be called the greatest impostor the world ever saw? We boldly affirm that he never assumed one of these characters to himself; nor are we afraid of a contradiction from the Bible. The highest character he ever assumed, was, *the Son of God.*

The writer proceeds: "And his apostles were a simple, infatuated people, not worthy of the least regard—seeing they have asserted that to be a fact, which is not true." That the apostles ever asserted this to be a fact, that Jesus Christ in his essential character was God—the eternal being—the creator of the universe, is denied by many, probably as learned, as honest, and as good as the writer. It is a subject of long and endless controversy, into which we have no desire here to enter; as enough and too much has been already written on this point. But should the writer hereafter make specifications of the apostles' testimony *to this fact*, we shall not decline an investigation.

The writer in his great zeal has transcended *orthodoxy* itself, by confounding the persons of the trinity; for he says, "He is the Father; he is the Son; he is the Word." He asks, "Is he the Saviour of those, who do not believe him to be what he is in reality?" that is in his essential character, God—the eternal being—the creator of the universe. He boldly denies salvation to such, unless they renounce their unworthy pretensions,

and acknowledge "that he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." We hope there are none, professing Christianity, who would not willingly make this acknowledgement; we hope there are none who would not with Peter acknowledge that *he was the Christ, the son of the living God.* We hope there are none, who do not receive the witness of the Father, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." How all things were made by him, we are informed, Heb. i, 1. Here God is said to have made the worlds by his son. In v. 10, the father declares of the son, that the earth and the heavens are the works of his hands. In v. 8 and 9, the father addresses the son:—"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Such declarations need no comment; should any be thought necessary, we refer to Eph. iii, 9, I. Cor. viii, 6.

"Christians, (says the writer) have the evidence within themselves, that Christ is God. But is not the evidence wanting in those who deny the fact?" This is bare assertion. With equal ease the contrary might be asserted, and the arguments or assertions be of equal weight. But the writer, and his copyist by this expression, have plainly manifested a perfect want of charity for such as receive not their dogmas on this subject. It would certainly do them no harm, but much good to read, and ponder well I. Cor. xiii.

He proceeds: "If the doctrine of the adorable trinity be true, then are a large majority of professing Christians right." This is not so self-evident as he may think. If trinity be a doctrine of scripture, all the various and discrepant theories of trinitarians cannot be right—they may all be wrong; but one only can be right; and who can determine which is the right one? and whether the majority of Christians are in this right one? We know it to be a fact, that many professed trinitarians, made so by education, deny the doctrine

when stated to them fairly. They have received the doctrine as an incomprehensible mystery; yet by reading the scriptures they have formed correct notions of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The writer adds, "But if it (the trinity) is not true, then are a small minority correct; not, however, by reasons, or just inferences, drawn from the Bible; but from a course of reasoning, which has either sophistry or deism for its guide." This sentence appears to us strange, very strange! If the doctrine of trinity be not true, then a small minority is right, the Bible wrong, and Deism true! This brings to my recollection the sentiment of a late English writer. Speaking of the United States, he says: "In no country is the wise toleration established by law so complete as in this. But in no country whatever, is a spirit of persecution for mere opinions, more prevalent than in the United States of America. It is a country most tolerant in theory, and most bigoted in practice." EDITOR.

The last number of the Western Luminary gave us cheering intelligence of revivals of religion among the Presbyterians in different parts of the United States. But great fear appears to be excited, lest these revivals should eventuate as that did in 1803, when so many rejected man-made creeds, and party names; and received the Bible alone as the standard of faith and practice, and the name *Christian* instead of party names. These the Luminary strangely considers as *new notions* and *new lights;* and solemnly warns his friends in the west, lest they should fall into the same fatal heresy! Astonishing! that in a Christian land, and by a protestant too, such a sentiment should be uttered! Yet he advances five arguments to persuade them to cleave to their party creeds and names, and to reject the receiving of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice, and the name *Christian* as their only name. To these arguments we will attend.

1st. That in all those places where the Lord is reviving his work, the churches of the different denomina-

tions are going on *in the good old way*, without carrying on a warfare against creeds and confessions." Vol. III. no. 30.

The force of the argument is this: If you desire to be blessed of God, and have revivals of religion among you, continue *in the good old way*, by which the Luminary means the various, jarring creeds and confessions of the different sects and denominations. Though the Presbyterians condemn many of the doctrines of the Methodist creed and discipline, as errors; yet it is thought better for them to continue in those errors, than to receive the Bible alone, and the name of Christ. For they who have done so are not blessed with revivals. This is his second argument to dissuade his friends in the west from rejecting their human authoritative creeds and party names, and taking the Bible alone and the name *Christian*, in their stead. For he adds:

2. "If there have been revivals in churches, in which the hue and cry have been raised on the subject of *priest-craft*," "*the kingdom of the clergy*," "*creeds and confessions* &c. &c. we have not been informed of them."

We think he must have lived a recluse in the west, not to have heard something of the many thousands, who, in the different revivals in the west, have been converted to the Lord, in those places too, where authoritative creeds and party names were zealously opposed, and the Bible alone warmly recommended to be received as the only rule of faith and practice, and the name *Christian*, as that given by divine authority. On the contrary, we profess never to have heard of one soul converted to God, by warring in defence of human authoritative creeds and party names, as being more acceptable and pleasing to God, than the Bible *alone*, and the Christian name. Is it possible that the Luminary thinks that the frowns of God are upon those who prefer his word, and the name he has given, to the jarring creeds and names devised by men?

The revivals at this time among Presbyterians, we believe from the knowledge of facts, have not commenced and progressed by preaching the confession, or its

peculiar and leading doctrines; for these, in every revival we have known among them, have been left out of view. The simple, plain doctrine of the Bible has been preached, and warmly urged; as the necessity of regeneration, faith, and repentance; the general calls and invitations of the gospel; the encouragements and promises to returning sinners; the willingness and sufficiency of Christ to save all that come to him, and the danger of rejecting him, and his grace. This is the doctrine blessed of God, when preached in the spirit, and received by faith, joined with obedience. A true revival always manifests its divine character by brotherly love, peace, union, and humility. Wherever these are found, we acknowledge it of God, and cordially unite in giving him the glory.

The Luminary produces three more arguments to persuade his friends to cleave to *the good old way*, their jarring creeds and confessions, and to avoid the *new notions* and *new lights* in the west. He warns them of the danger of being carried away by them, from the facts which transpired in 1803.

1st. A part of the Synod of Kentucky at that time assumed the Christian name, rejected creeds and confessions, and received the Bible alone without comment or explanation. Oh, what dreadful heresy is this! In what awful danger must such people be! It must be wonderful that the Church of Christ for the three first centuries, could have been preserved from ruin without the aid of a human creed, or party name; for they had the Bible alone, and the name of Christ alone! Alas for his friends in the west, should they be led away with these *new notions!* For of six Presbyterian preachers who did so, *three were swept off by the Shakers.* What is the conclusion? Surely, that the Bible is an insufficient guide—a dangerous book! So thought the Pope and his Cardinals long ago, and therefore in their wisdom and clemency, debarred the people from reading it. Protestants permit the people to read it, but they must understand it as explained in the confession, or become subject to censure and exclusion from the Church. Which of the two acts most consistently?

The argument used by the Luminary against the *new notion* of receiving the Bible alone will equally apply against receiving the confession of faith. For we might warn our friends in the West against receiving the confession, because several ministers were swept off by the Shakers. It must therefore be a dangerous book, an insufficient guide, and bond of union. So we might prove the danger of the Methodists' and Baptists' creeds, as many of their societies were swept off by the Shakers, and this before they had taken the dreadful leap of taking the Bible alone as their rule, and the name Christian for their name. These *new notions* they had not previously received.

2. The Luminary states another important historical fact, as a beacon to warn his friends from going after *new notions*. Two others of the six preachers who assumed the name *Christian*, and took the Bible alone for their rule, returned to the church from which they departed. As the design of stating this fact is to warn, let us hear it. Take warning from these two men of the west, not to follow after *new notions*, as they did in assuming the name *Christian*, and in taking the Bible alone, to the rejection of all authoritative creeds and confessions. They have found the Bible *alone*, by experiment, an insufficient guide—a book not profitable for doctrine, reproof, nor correction, nor for instruction in righteousness—that it cannot make the man of God perfect, it cannot thoroughly furnish him to every good work. They have after wandering in the wide fields of the Bible some years, become discouraged; and being convinced of the necessity of the confession of faith as a better guide, as *the good old way*, have returned to the Church which is built upon it. Look at this beacon and take warning.

The last fact stated to warn his friends from going after *new notions*, is, that Mr B. W. Stone, the remaining one of the six preachers, who took the Bible alone, is now at the head of the Unitarian sect in the west. Surely the *Bible alone*, without an orthodox comment or explanation, must be, in the eye of the Luminary, a very mis

chievous and dangerous book: three preachers were made Shakers, two wandered long, and one became a Unitarian, by receiving it alone; and some other *ism* is hinted at towards the close, by which, we presume, is meant *deism;* as this is the common epithet of the day. Though the arguments lead us clearly to this conclusion, we cannot for a moment think that the Luminary entertains this view of the Bible, or would put such a Bible—destructive weapon—into the hand of infidelity.

The honor of being the head of a sect in the west Stone never claimed; the name *Unitarian* he never assumed, but equally rejects with every other party name; and as to a party sect, he abhors, and for more than twenty years has opposed the idea. He stands with his brethren on the Bible, a ground safe and sure. This we know shall ultimately triumph over all opposition, when boasted creeds and confessions shall be known no more, only as monuments of the folly and weakness of poor fallible men. We know that the war between the Bible and human creeds has commenced, and will never cease till the weaker dies. We are in no doubt as to its issue. All the physical and moral means of the various parties, are brought forth into operation to defend their creeds and standards. A mighty effort is making in the east, west, north, and south. The heavens are shaking, and every thing which cannot stand the shock, must be shaken out. The Bible will stand, and all who stand on it, and are possessed of its divine spirit, shall stand firm and undismayed forever. EDITOR.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Mr Editor—As the principal objects of the Christian Messenger, are to exhibit truth and expose error, with a view to these I wish to present a few thoughts to your readers, which were suggested by a sermon delivered a few evenings since in my hearing, by an *orthodox* preacher of one of the popular sects of the day. His text was Luke xiv, 17: "Come, for all things are now ready." After a short exordium, he proceeded, with all the self confidence of a true son of the mother church,

very methodically to the investigation of his subject. He took the following positions, and made some efforts to maintain them, especially the first.

1st. God the Father is ready, for God the Son has died.

2d. God the Son is ready, for God the Holy Ghost is given.

3d. God the Holy Ghost is ready, for light and conviction have reached the world.

Strange positions! thought I. And if they be true, surely tritheism is the doctrine of the Bible; for here are three Gods as distinctly named, as words could make them. For if different persons, with different names and of different works, will not prove separate existence, I ask what will? God the Father is ready; for God the Son, who is a distinct person from him, and equal to him, has died. God the Son is ready, because God the Holy Ghost, who is distinct from both the Father and the Son, and equal to each of them, is given. God the Holy Ghost is ready, because light and conviction has reached the world. So that these three persons, each of whom is *perfect God*, are ready; but each is ready for a separate and distinct reason!

Suppose I assert that A, B, and C, have a particular work to perform; that each has to act a particular part in accomplishing the work; that A is ready to perform his part, because B has fulfilled certain previous obligations to him; that B is ready because C has done something else; and that C is ready for a reason different from both the others. I farther assert that A is a man, that B is a man, and that C is a man. What must be the conclusion from these statements? Certainly that A, B, and C are distinct and different men. For similar reasons, it appears to me impossible to draw any other just conclusion from the positions of our preacher than this, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three distinct Gods.

Suppose I farther assert, though A, B, and C, are distinct persons, and each a separate man, and filling a separate office, yet they are not three men, but one

man; would not all exclaim with one voice, 'that is impossible, it is a contradiction'? To reason in proof of this proposition would be useless. The application is easy, that the positions of our preacher are self-contradictory, and in opposition to the language and import of scripture, as they go to destroy the very foundation of all true religion, the doctrine of the "one God, the Father."

It will not help the matter, to assert that the terms, *Father, Son, Spirit, Person,* &c. as used in the scripture, are understood in a sense different from what they have in common use among men; for if words, when used by the Almighty to communicate divine and important truth to his creatures, are to be understood in a sense different from any known to us, we should be as much in the dark in relation to the important truth contained in those words, as if no communication had been made.

"How can we reason, but from what we know!" Could such a communication be properly called a revelation? And can any man of good sense seriously maintain such a position?—a position which reflects disgrace upon the wisdom and benevolence of our heavenly Father. Am I mistaken when I affirm that this sentiment, that the scripture is mysterious, and contains a hidden meaning, different from that communicated by its words, which meaning none but priests specially called of God, and furnished with spiritual perceptions, can explain?—that this sentiment was the very means by which the priests of the mother of harlots established and maintained that unhallowed influence and power over the consciences of the people, which have been so productive of mischief to the church and to the world? Do not Protestants themselves, who plead for this sentiment, carry with them this relic of the old mother, the very life and soul of popery?

I think it is clearly ascertained, that the positions of our preacher involve the absurd idea of three Gods. I do not suppose that he believes this absurd notion; he no doubt abhors it as cordially as any other. I wish merely to shew that the ground which he took, and which the *orthodox* generally take on this subject, can-

not be maintained in consistency with this glorious Bible truth, that there is *but one true and living God.*

The only exposition the preacher gave of *the all things* in the text was, that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, were ready, and the reasons why. What! thought I; and do *the all things* in the text mean the three persons in the trinity! And are these three eternal persons (admitting the doctrine true) *things! three things*, and but one being!! I had ever thought that the *all things ready* had an exclusive reference to the provisions of the gospel; but our preacher thought differently. Having stated, that "God the Father is ready, for God the Son has died," he attempted by four arguments, or rather positive assertions, to prove negatively that God the Father never could be ready, till God the Son had died. For until he died, according to the preacher, "the way to heaven was blocked up." The proof of this assertion he found in the flaming sword, spoken of in Genesis, which was placed "to guard the way of the tree of life." This sword he explained to be the justice of God. What! Did the justice of God "block up" the way to heaven? Is not the way to heaven "the high way of holiness"? So the Bible teaches. The justice of God, then, or the just God himself was actually engaged in keeping mankind from the way of holiness till "God the Son died"! Would it not be difficult, on this hypothesis to clear God from being the author of sin? To keep men from the way of holiness has always been the delightful employment of the prince of darkness. In this horrid work, according to this doctrine, we see both God and Satan unite and heartily concur in blocking up the way to heaven!

But I asked myself, did not the justice of God always require of men to be holy? Most certainly. Will it not appear then, that while justice "blocked up the way to heaven," it had claims upon us of the most contradictory and opposite nature? Will it not appear to be divided against itself, requiring of us to be holy, and yet at the same time opposing it by blocking up the way?

Will it not also hence appear, that the justice of God must fall, and with it the Deity himself, according to the well known maxim of the Saviour, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." However strange this sentiment may seem, it is in perfect accordance with the drift of our preacher's discourse; for he informed us, that the way to heaven, which had been blocked up by the justice of God, was opened when *God the Son died.* Then justice did not *stand in the way*, but *was moved out of the way!!* I forbear farther remarks on our preacher's sermon. A few reflections and I shall have done.

Merciful God! and is this orthodoxy? Is this the test of Christian character? Who then can be saved? And are these the sentiments, to support which so much charity and Christian feeling have been thrown away, and the earth been crimsoned with blood? Are these the notions yet maintained by the popular sects as the distinguishing badge of the Christian? Are these the notions for the rejection of which we must must be cast out from the bosom of our friends, treated as intolerable heretics, our names loaded with infamy and reproach, the Christian name and character denied us, and we ranked among Deists and other enemies of the cross? Oh! how long shall the doctrines and commandments of men occupy the place of God's holy and perfect word! How long, O Lord, till the mists and clouds of ignorance, superstition, and error, be driven from the heavens by the gales of truth, and the sun of righteousness shine in all his resplendent glory upon thy drooping church, and diffuse light, life, and health through every part!

Though it is calculated to sink the heart of piety to behold the errors and superstitions, which like a flood are deluging the church, and drowning in their deeps, peace, love, union, and almost every virtue, that assimilates man to his maker, and fits him for the society of the blessed; yet such a heart derives consolation from the consideration that error is fast flying before truth; that liberal gospel principles are fast gaining ground; that the spirit of inquiry has gone forth; that men every where begin to see and feel that they are fallible, and

therefore not disposed to lay such infinite stress upon their own notions and speculations; they begin to acknowledge *heartily* that the right of private judgment is the gift of God to all, and that he alone is the Lord of conscience. Above all, the pious heart may rejoice from this consideration, that "the Lord reigneth," and has promised the complete and eternal triumph of truth. Happy shall that people be, who shall be found walking in it! Then, Christian reader, let it be our great concern to know and obey the truth, lest while we think we may be doing God service, we be found fighting against him. TIMOTHY.

THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

The nation appears roused to this subject. The greater part of the state legislatures have expressed their decided approbation of it. Religious societies are every where lending their aid. It is our wish to awaken the attention of the West, and to engage all in the laudable work. The subject is now before our national legislature, and it is hoped, not in vain. We publish an extract from the speech of a distinguished citizen, for the information of our readers. The constitution shall appear in a subsequent number.

"Mr. Custis anticipated with exultation the results that would follow the success of the society's efforts in removing this wretched population from the American soil, and restoring them to the land of their forefathers. When the bark that bore them approached the African shore, it would not be hailed with such shouts as welcomed Columbus when he bore to the people of the Western Archipelago the emblem of the cross—an emblem that appeared only to both nations in each others' blood. We sent them the star-spangled banner, that constellation whose rising lighted the world to freedom. When that banner shall float over their corn-clad hills and plains, waving in harvest, they will not think of Cortez or Pizarro; the name of America will be hailed with enthusiasm by millions on that vast continent that are now unborn. He called the society to remember the first

colonization of this country. A feeble little vessel bore the adventurous band, but virtue and religion led the way; the genius of philosophy was perched upon the helm. Now we are a great nation; should we not pity others?

"In his remarks upon the unhappy situation of the planters, Mr C. said, that what he spoke, he spoke not from speculation; he brought not the dreams of others, but his own experience; touching all those evils, he might with truth say, "*Quorum magna pars fui.*" He had lived to see, and painfully to feel, the errors of the system. His great hope lay in the magnanimity of those who were happily free from that system, and who, when they understood and became convinced of the feelings and desires of the men of the south for its entire removal, and saw a plan for that removal that presented a feasible prospect of success, would not, could not, refuse their aid to carry it into effect. The nation possessed the power to effect it. The republic was not now feeble and panting from the mighty effort of its newly accomplished emancipation; it had had time to breathe, to recruit its strength, to be refreshed, and to prepare itself for new exertions in the cause of light and liberty, and human happiness. On the subject of this enterprize, the nation has been as if in deep sleep; but when the lion has slept, it was not the time to form conjectures on his power; would you see his strength, you must rouse him from his lair. With respect to the American republic, she had only to awake, she had but to

"Stretch her hand—
She heav'd the gods the ocean of the land."

What had she not already achieved? If she could only be brought to *think* upon the subject, and once to turn her strength to its accomplishment, all difficulties would vanish before her way. The national genius, like the tube of Herschell, will discover satellites and suns that none believed had place within the starry sphere.

To CORRESPONDENTS.—"Milton" and "Philip" are thankfully received, and shall be inserted in our next.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,
AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

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HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.
No. II.

Under these circumstances we retired, during a short recess of Synod, to ask counsel of the Lord, and consult with one another.

When we came to converse on the subject, we found it had struck each of our minds precisely in the same point of light, without any preconcerted plan. To appeal to the general assembly, so long as human opinions were esteemed the standard of orthodoxy, we had little hope of redress. We therefore determined to withdraw from the jurisdiction of Synod, and cast ourselves upon that God, who had led us hitherto in safety through many trials and difficulties; and who we believe, will lead us safely on to the end.

We then concluded to draw up, and enter our protest against the proceedings of Synod. While we were doing this, the Synod were employed in debating on the propriety of proceeding on in the new inquisition, as will appear from the following extract:

"Whereas the Synod have taken into consideration certain petitions and papers respecting the conduct of Washington Presbyterry at Springfield, &c. which conduct this Synod have said was out of order, &c. On motion, resolved that Synod now enter upon the examination or trial of Messrs McNemar and Thompson, according to the prayer of the petitions, and the charges therein stated; and also that this Synod resolve the questions of doctrines, seriously and reasonably proposed in their petitions."

"While Synod were deliberating on the propriety of adopting the above resolution, Messrs Marshall, Stone,

Dunlavy, McNemar, and Thompson, appeared in Synod, and having given their reasons for not attending sooner, they presented a paper through Mr Marshall, which that gentleman stated to be a protest against the proceedings of Synod, in the affair of Washington Presbytery, and a declaration that they withdrew from the jurisdiction of Synod, this paper was read and is as follows:

"*To the Moderator of the Synod of Kentucky.*

"Rev. Sir—We, the underwritten members of Washington and West Lexington Presbyterries, do hereby enter our protest against the proceedings of Synod, in approbating that minute of the Washington Presbytery, which condemned the sentiments of Mr McNemar, as dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all true religion; and the proceeding therewith connected: and for reasons which we now offer, we declare ourselves no longer members of your reverend body, nor under your jurisdiction, or that of your Presbyteries.

1. "We conscientiously believe, that the above minute, which you sanctioned, gives a distorted and false representation of Mr McNemar's sentiments, and that the measure was calculated to prevent the influence of truths of the most interesting nature.

2. "We claim the privilege of interpreting the scripture by itself, according to section 9, chapter 1, of the Confession of Faith; and believe that the Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scriptures.

"But from the disposition which Synod manifests, it appears to us that we cannot enjoy this privilege, but must be bound up to such explanations of the word of God, as preclude all farther enquiry after truth.

3. "We remain inviolably attached to the doctrines of grace, which through God have been mighty in every revival of true religion since the reformation. These

doctrines, however, we believe, are in a measure darkened, by some expressions in the Confession of Faith, which are used as the means of strengthening sinners in their unbelief, and subjecting many of the pious to a spirit of bondage. When we attempt to obviate those difficulties, we are charged with departing from our standards, viewed as disturbers of the peace of the church, and threatened to be called to account. The proceedings of Presbytery have furnished the world with ample encouragement in this mode of opposition; and the sanction which those proceedings have now received from your reverend body, cuts off every hope of relief from that quarter, from which we have at least faintly expected it. We therefore feel ourselves shut up to the necessity of relieving you from the disagreeable task of receiving petitions from the public, and ourselves from being prosecuted before a judge* whose authority to decide we *cannot in conscience acknowledge.*

Rev. Sir—Our affection for you as brethren in the Lord, is, and we hope shall ever be the same; nor do we desire to separate from your communion, or to exclude you from ours. We ever wish to bear and forbear in matters of human order or opinion, and unite our joint supplications with yours for the increasing effusions of that divine spirit, which is the bond of peace.

With this disposition of mind, we bid you adieu, until, through the providence of God, it seem good to your reverend body, to adopt a more liberal plan respecting human creeds and confessions.

ROBERT MARSHALL,
JOHN DUNLAVY,
RICHARD MCNEMAR,
BARTON W. STONE,
JOHN THOMPSON.

"*Done in Lexington, Ky. Sept. 10th*, 1803."

The introduction of the above protest put a sudden check to the examining system. The protest was then

*Confession of Faith.

read, and shortly after, we retired from the house.

Synod then appointed a committee to converse with us, as you will see in the following extract from their minutes:

"On motion, resolved, that Messrs D. Rice, Matthew Houston, and James Welsh, be a committee, seriously and affectionately to converse with Messrs Marshall, &c. to labour to bring them back to the standards and doctrines of our church, and report Monday morning."

"On motion, resolved, that Mr Joseph Howe be added as a member to the committee appointed to converse with Messrs Marshall, &c."

The result of this conference you have in the report of the committee as follows:

"The committee appointed to converse with Messrs Marshall, &c. report as follows, viz:—That the aforesaid gentlemen agree, that they will confer with Synod on points of doctrine, in the following manner, viz:—they will answer any questions proposed to them by Synod, which may be stated in writing, in writing again; and that they are ready to enter upon the business as soon as they may receive notice for that purpose.

N. B. The whole of the questions shall be given in at once."

To this committee we further stated, that we were willing to return, and be considered under the care and jurisdiction of Synod as formerly, provided they would constitute us into one Presbytery; and if they had any charges to bring against us, with respect to doctrines, or otherwise, let them come forward in an orderly manner, according to the book of discipline, criminate us as a Presbytery, and bring our sentiments to the word of God as the standard, and we were willing to stand trial.

To these proposals we received no answer. It appears that Synod had considerable debating among them, whether they would comply with the proposal contained in the report of committee, in conferring with us in writing; and that there was a diversity of opinion

on that subject. A resolution being introduced for that purpose, it passed in the negative, 12 to 7.

Why Synod did not accede to the proposal we could not then tell, for they sent us no answer. However, one of their reasons, as we afterwards understood, was that the whole of the questions must be given in at once. The weight of this reason we leave to the reader to determine. We were not only willing, but anxious to have our sentiments fairly and fully investigated, provided we were put in a situation to have a fair hearing. This we knew we could not obtain, while the leading members of Synod were in their present spirit. We did not expect to have the privilege of discussing the subjects before Synod in the capacity in which we then stood; and were unwilling to bring our *necks again under a yoke*, which we had so lately thrown off. The only fair way, then, to prevent quibbling and misrepresentation, was to do it in writing, as we could not do it any other way, unless we revoked our protest, and came again under the jurisdiction of Synod.

But the Synod had another objection to our proposal, viz: they could not confer with us as *a body*, because they could not acknowledge the legality of *this body*. Time has a wonderful power in legalizing bodies! a few years have legalized the self-created bodies of Luther, Calvin, and all the different sects of Christians since the reformation! A few more years may legalize our *body* in the estimation of Synod, when we hope they will condescend to confer with us, and unity be restored.

Though we had withdrawn from the jurisdiction of Synod, it was of necessity, rather than of choice. We found we must forsake them, or what we believed *the truth*: the former were dear to us, but the latter was dearer. Under these circumstances we again committed ourselves to God, and constituted ourselves into a Presbytery, known by the name of the Springfield Presbytery.

TO BE CONTINUED.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

To Thomas T. Skillman, Editor of the Western Luminary, and a ruling Elder in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Sir—Your publication in the Luminary of the 24th of January, demands of the friends of truth, and the disciples of Jesus Christ, some attention.

The attack you have made against the Church of Christ, and against the Christian name and character as innovations, to be avoided, and as being fraught with error and heresy, is a real novelty in this enlightened age. You array Presbyterianism and every species of schism against the religion of Jesus Christ and the unity of his church. I wonder that you were not afraid to act thus; nothing but ignorance of the truth and of consequences, would have inspired you with so much boldness. Did you not feel some misgivings of heart, when you indulged in railing against the name and church of Christ? You have indeed, like Goliath of Gath, come out with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; they are however of Presbyterian mould and temper. I come out to thee in the name of Jesus Christ, the Lord of Hosts, the God of the Armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. You ought to have remembered that the word of God utters forth a warning voice against your whole ecclesiastical system, a system which most evidently bears the image and mark of the beast. By this remark I do not design to be understood as meaning that none of your subjects are Christians; I am sure that many of them are. I mean that your whole church system of Presbyterianism is anti-scriptural, and is usurpation over the consciences of men; and to the full extent of its legitimate operations, is an injury to the interests of true Christianity. It was rash in you to provoke investigation under the light of civil and religious liberty in these United States. The fetters which you have fastened upon the consciences of the people, and which were forged in a period of darkness, ignorance, and oppression, are liable to be exposed and broken.

Have you forgotten, Sir, the circumstances under which your Presbyterian establishment originated? The Westminster assembly, you know, which began its session July 1st, 1643, 183 years ago, met to reform some abuses of episcopacy, but in consequence of the Parliament of Great Britain becoming very much embarrassed in its contest with Charles I, and for the sake of the advantages to be derived from the Scots' alliance in men and money, they laid aside Episcopacy and attempted to establish the Presbyterial form, which they at length advanced into *jus divinum*, or a divine institution. When they commenced their session, they took *an oath*, (yes, you know your confession of faith authorizes religious swearing, though positively forbidden by Christ) that they would not maintain any thing in matter of doctrine but what *they believed in their consciences to be most agreeable to the word*, or in point of discipline but what *they should conceive* most to the glory of God, and the good and peace of his church. This oath was read every Monday morning. Their oath, to be conscientious and honest in making *your book of doctrines* agreeable to the word of God, and to form *your church* agreeably to *their conceptions*, without reference to the word of God, is fairly put in *contrast* with, and in *opposition* to, the direct instructions of Jesus Christ, who is the foundation, head, and builder of the church, and the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, imparted to the Apostles for the express purpose of making a full developement of the church of God in every particular.

Your establishment in these United States, has gone one step further than the Westminster Assembly did. Your Professors in your Theological Schools are required by your General Assembly, "In the presence of God" (this is their oath or asseveration) "and the Directors of the Seminary, solemnly and *ex animo* adopt, receive, and subscribe the confession of faith and catechisms of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, as the confession of *their* faith; or as a summary and just exhibition of that system of doctrine and religious belief, which is contained in Holy Scripture.

and therein revealed by God to man, for his salvation; and they do solemnly *ex animo* profess to receive the form of government of said church as agreeable to the inspired oracles; and do solemnly promise and engage not to inculcate, teach, or insinuate any thing, which shall appear to them to contradict or contravene either directly or impliedly any thing taught in the said confession of faith, or catechisms; nor to oppose any of the fundamental principles of Presbyterian government, while they shall continue professors in the Seminary."

Here they swear to receive the form of church government as agreeable to the inspired oracles, which the Westminster assembly only conceived to be most to the glory of God, without reference to the scripture; for they bound themselves to make their *doctrinal matter* only agreeable to the word. That which was *forced* upon the Westminster assembly by the necessity of the times, and which they were compelled to receive, in order to strengthen their army against the king, by entering into the Scots' alliance, and which was in the terms of the oath excepted from the word of God as being agreeable thereto, is by Presbyterian professors in these United States solemnly avouched before Almighty God "as being agreeable to the inspired oracles." Now, Sir, the difference between *your* authority and power to preserve order and to communicate the truth for *your own* glory and honour and emolument, and the authority of Jesus Christ and the apostles, and those who act in conformity to their word, is the precise difference between the Presbyterian name and church of Jesus Christ. You have publicly, in your paper, acknowledged that your whole system of human wisdom and authority were not able to prevent poor Dunlavy, McNemar, and Huston, from becoming Shakers. The reason was, that these men, though very honourable and popular preachers, *as Presbyterians*, never knew what the scriptures were written for, nor had they ever learnt the intrinsic difference between the word of God, and the authority and church of Christ, and the word and authority of the Presbyterian church. Suppose these men had been

placed directly under the authority of Jesus Christ, and in the knowledge of gospel truth, instead of being under the authority of Presbyterianism and in the knowledge of your catechisms, confessions, &c.; do you not think they would have been kept by *His* power through faith unto salvation? Suppose further, as you have insinuated, that many others are erroneous, which is most likely to convert them, the word of God and his spirit, or *your* word and your spirit? It would be just as seemly for you to urge the people to go back to old England for a constitution, laws, and form of government, in a civil point of view, as to go there for confessions of faith, catechisms, and church articles, in a religious point of view. The latter is not less treasonable against the church and laws of Christ in the gospel, than the former would be against the constitution and laws of these United States, in reference to civil government. You have yet to learn, that there is a great difference between revivals which produce accessions to mere Presbyterianism and to the Presbyterian ranks, and revivals which turn even from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan, and every form of the heart, unto God.

If any thing in this address has the appearance of harshness, your own temerity has produced it. You seem to consider yourself placed for the defence of all old errors, and to measure out blows hot and heavy upon the shoulders of those who prefer the word of God and the church of Christ in religion, to the opinions of men and human institutions. This is according to Presbyterianism throughout. Dr. Miller as your champion, acting under the *strange oath* above detailed, has come out with a zeal that becomes a better cause, against the sensible, conscientious, and pious Mr Duncan, for declining Presbyterial supremacy. The exhortatian of God to every Christian is, "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free." All your efforts will not be able to stop the power of that redeeming spirit, whose breath dissolves the chains of tyranny. You have my prayers for success upon all your exertions in disseminating the scriptures, and by the use of the

means God has ordained, for converting sinners; but not for building up anti-Christian churches, and thereby derogating from Jesus Christ his honour and glory, and placing them upon your own brow.

MILTON.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Having submitted a few remarks in one of your former numbers, on the propriety of occasional meetings of Christians, with a single view to religious worship and edification, I propose making some additional observations on the government of the church of God. For information on this subject, our strong appeal will be to the Bible; to that high source every Christian should go, and "*learn of him, who is meek and lowly in heart,*" the various duties that necessarily devolve upon the followers of the Lamb.

When we read in the New Testament, the form of doctrine taught by the Lord and his apostles, the unsullied purity of that doctrine, the equal privileges and immunities of every member of each church, and the simplicity of that divine order of government therein exhibited; and when we contrast it with the present divided, jarring, and abstruse government, now prevalent in the Christian world, we are filled with astonishment in beholding the striking difference between the primitive simplicity of that order, instituted in the early and flourishing age of Christianity, and that which was subsequently introduced, and which has been continued through successive ages, overrunning and obscuring the original plainness of the ancient order. When we therefere ascertain what that system of government was, which was instituted by Jesus and his apostles, we then ascertain what is yet binding on the church, being still governed by the same King, "*who is head over all things to the church,*" as his government knows no alteration, and his people must continue to be controlled by the same unalterable laws, while in a state of probation. To the great law-giver we must submit, without regard to those who may thereby *decrease*.

"*The church,*" we maintain, is the highest, and only religious tribunal, to which any member "*of the body*" is responsible; it is absolutely independent, as being accountable to no earthly association for its conduct, and when moving in its proper sphere, is entirely uncontrolled by councils, synods, conferences, or associations. By a church I mean an assembly of disciples, believing with all their hearts the gospel of the Son of God, and manifesting in all their conduct, the truth of Jesus, and the purity of his gospel, "*by walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*" To this assembly only is every member responsible, whether of a public or private character; and it invariably possesses the inherent right of exercising supreme authority, in governing and controlling its members, maintaining its virtue and purity, and doing every thing necessary and proper for its complete and entire independency, prosperity, peace, and happiness. That Christian churches were originally invested with these sovereign rights, powers, privileges, and liberties, is apparent from the Holy Scriptures; and we are unspeakably astonished, that these fundamental principles should be controverted by any candid inquirer and lover of truth.

For the truth of the position we have thus taken, let us appeal to the only infallible guide and unerring authority. In support of the fact that each church originally exercised supreme authority in governing and controlling its members, we cite the reader to Mat. xviii, 15, 16, 17, "Moreover, if thy brother tresspass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Thus speaks the great head of the church. Does it not go clearly to confirm that for which we contend? No mention is made of a higher tribunal; no intimation of an appeal to a supe-

rior ecclesiastical court; "but let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." To pursue or to adopt a different course, is to oppose the order of God, and appears to be a species of rebellion against the King of Heaven. Again, II. Tim. iii, 16, 17, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Here the design of the scriptures is unequivocally declared to be given, that Christians may be perfect, and thoroughly furnished with every thing necessary to be known, for their edification and perfection; and as no intimation of a tribunal superior to the church is given, we are bound to believe, that Christians have a form of government entirely perfect, without the addition of laws made by fallible councils. I. Cor. v. chap. and numerous other passages we might introduce, go conclusively to establish the same fact. The following passages confirm the statement that each church had, and selected its own officers: Acts xiv, 23; Titus i, 6; Acts i, 2–6, & vi, 3; I. Peter v, 1–4; Phil. i, 1. From which it is evident, that the primitive religious societies, planted and set in order by the apostles, and governed by those laws and rules given by inspiration, were completely independent, uncontrolled by any foreign jurisdiction, or any association of churches; they managed their own affairs, and chose their own officers. Hence their government was materially variant from that which has been generally received for ages past.

If no other testimony existed to prove the original and former sovereignty or the churches, that already given would be amply sufficient for every lover of truth; but the same fact stands most clearly attested by Church History. Dr. Mosheim, in speaking of the government of the church, in its early age, remarks, that "Every Christian church consisted of the people, their leaders, and ministers; and these indeed belong to every religious society. The people were undoubtedly first in authority; for the apostles shewed by their example

that nothing of moment was to be carried on or determined without the consent of the assembly. It was therefore the assembly of the people, which chose their own rulers and teachers, or received them by a free or authoritative consent, when recommended by others; that excommunicated profligate or unworthy members of the church; restored the penitent to their forfeited privileges; passed judgment upon the different subjects of controversy and dissention, that arose in the community; in a word, that exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the *sovereign power*." Such is the candid statement given by this distinguished historian. How analagous the picture thus drawn by Mosheim of the government of the churches in the first century, with that exhibited in the New Testament! Is not the position that "the churches were entirely independent, none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each one governed by its own rules and laws," (for such is again the language of Mosheim) fairly and positively established by the word of God, and corroborated by Church History?

Reader, observe with attention the above quotation from Mosheim: "Every Christian assembly consisted of the people, their leaders, &c. which essentially belong to every church—the people first in authority." Is not this satisfactorily proven from the word of God? Is such the fact at present, with the great majority of churches in our land? Instead of the "people being first in authority," are they not in many societies the mere dupes and vassals of the clergy? Instead of being first in authority, do they not suffer themselves to be shamefully dictated to, and their Christian rights and privileges entirely taken from them? Even the apostles, who were placed upon the twelve thrones, by the great head of the church, "shewed by their example that nothing of moment was to be carried or determined without the consent of the assembly." Oh that the dignitaries of this day would follow their "example." It is certainly worthy of imitation. But alas! how different! Now, those who lord it over God's heritage, can carry

and determine matters of importance, *without the consent of the assembly*, spurn the *people* from their deliberations, compel them to obey their canons and rules, and submit unreservedly to their *determinations*, or be *cast out of the synagogue*. How variant this from apostolic times! "It was the people which chose their own rulers and teachers;" but now the people receive those chosen, not by themselves, but by others for them. But why comment? The extract shows for itself, and plainly marks the difference between the ancient order of things, when "the church exercised all that authority which belongs to such as are invested with the sovereign power," and the modern or present order, when the church is governed by laws, not made by Jesus or his apostles, but by conferences, synods, and associations.

I know that there are exceptions amongst many of our opposing brethren, to whom many of our remarks will not apply; we only design them for such as they will suit; and that they will apply to many in our day is apparent. The church must be restored to her original independence: Christians must arise and shake off that yoke of ecclesiastical despotism, and burst those fetters of degrading tyranny, which have so long sunk them below their privileges, before all will be right, and Christian union restored. We fondly hope the time is not far distant, when the "people" will assert and maintain their right to be free and independent, under Jesus the great head; and will search, examine, and judge the scriptures for themselves, and flow together in love.

For further information on this subject, I hope the reader will attend to your remarks on the "*family of God*," in your first number.

It is my intention to let you hear from me again.

Yours, PHILIP.

OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIAN UNION CONSIDERED.

We find that the grand objection made against Christian union, or against rejecting all authoritative human creeds and party names, and adopting the Bible alone

and the name *Christian*, is, that on this plan all the various, heterogeneous mass of sectarians, of every name, would amalgamate, to the real injury of religion.

Answer. Let us suppose that the various denominations of Christians in the West, from reading the scriptures, have learned that it is the will of God that all his people should be *one;* that they should walk by the same rule; and that there should be no divisions or schisms among them; that the opposite to these is contrary to the will of God, and to the order established by the Head of the Church. And what Christian, acquainted with the Bible, can be blind to these facts? Let us again suppose, that under the conviction of these facts, they all agree to meet at a specified time and place, and to confer together respecting some plan of reform, so as to sink into the will of God and do it. They meet. It is at once discovered that they cannot unite on any one of their particular creeds. It is equally impossible for them to make a creed in which they can all unite, without giving up their different systems; the Calvinists must give up the *five points*, and the Arminians must relinquish their opposites; the Trinitarians so divided among themselves, could never unite in an article on that subject; and the Unitarians, also divided among themselves, could never unite in a creed on this subject. All attempts at union on these plans are vain. We may rest assured, that the will of God can never be done in this way. It is as evident as demonstration, that as they all believe and receive the Bible as divine, and as the only authoritative creed and bond of union, on the Bible alone they can and must unite, or still remain in disobedience to the will of God.

Objection.—If we unite on the Bible, without an explanation of its doctrines, as a bond of union, we shall all soon be disunited again.

Answer.—Will the case be better if an explanation is made the bond of union? This has long been tried, and the history of the church for fifteen centuries proves, that from the very introduction of these *explanations*, as bonds of union, evils have been accumula-

ting, schisms increasing, and union appearing more distant. Were we all agreed to take the Bible alone, and to labor to conform our lives and hearts to its holy precepts, to provoke one another to love and good works, to exhort, admonish and comfort one another, would not the Lord be pleased with such a plan? Would he not perfect the union by pouring out upon us his uniting spirit? Surely he would bless his own doctrine. Unbelief and distrust in God can only doubt it. It will be realized, though our unbelief may repel the blessing from us.

Objection.—The precious doctrine of the Bible must be respected; and certainly the denial of any should be discountenanced, and made a term of fellowship.

Answer.—We must distinguish between a doctrine of the Bible, and human opinion of that doctrine. No Christian of any name among us, but receives every doctrine of the Bible clearly stated; yet Christians may have various opinions respecting the doctrine. Here let the old neglected virtues of forbearance and long suffering be cultivated, and the spirit of humility and brotherly love be maintained, and the soul-revolting idea of a general union of Christians will be banished, and religion, in its glory, be restored. Do we ever read in the scriptures of any being excluded from the church, but for ungodly conduct or immorality, or for doctrines which necessarily led to, and were connected with, sin? The person who was to be accounted by the church *as a heathen man*, or a publican, had previously transgressed, and every attempt to reclaim him had failed. The person excluded from the Corinthian Church was guilty of incest: So they who held the doctrines of Baalam and of the Nicolaitans, should be justly excluded, because those doctrines were immediately connected with sin. Rev: ii.

Will a good king punish or expatriate his subjects for not apprehending the meaning of some of his laws?—Does he not rather inflict this punishment on those alone, who presumptuously violate them? In the empire of Great Britain, the kingdom of Ireland has form-

ed opinions of some of the laws of the government, different from the opinions formed by the kingdom of Scotland; and the kingdom of Scotland has formed opinions of the same laws different from the opinions, which the kingdom of England has formed. Yet they all live united in the bonds of peace; all are attached to their king and his government. Would this diversity of opinions be so offensive to the king, that his indignation should burst forth in vengeance upon them? If he should, would he not be justly execrated as a merciless tyrant? And will the merciful *King of Kings* deal thus with his poor ignorant subjects for not perfectly understanding all his laws, or for forming different opinions of some of his doctrines, while they are honestly and sincerely labouring to know and do his will? We think not. And if any, professing to act by his authority, should act otherwise from him, would they not betray their profession? Undoubtedly they would.

But suppose each of these kingdoms in the empire of Great Britain, should deem its opinions of the King's laws so sacred and correct, as to warrant a disunion from those who differed from it; suppose each kingdom should establish a government on its peculiar notions, and should exclude from the kingdom all who differed from it: would not this be called rebellion against the government of the empire? Would not every loyal subject in the empire, uninfluenced by sinister or party views, oppose it? And in acting thus, would he not equally incur the displeasure of every party? That the application may be easily understood, we observe: in the empire of heaven, there are many kingdoms. They have all formed different opinions of some of the doctrines of the government, and deem those opinions so sacred as to warrant a separation from, and exclusion of, all that differ from them. They have all established separate governments on their peculiar notions of the doctrine of their lawgiver and king, and they exclude from their communion and kingdom all that differ from them. Is not this rebellion against the King of Kings and his government?—*his government*, designed to unite all his

subjects in the strong bonds of love and peace? If it be not rebellion, we know not by what name to call it. Who should be accounted a loyal subject to the King of heaven? Surely the man who defends and supports the government of heaven, in opposition to partyism, and who labors in the *meekness of wisdom* to convince the different parties of their error, and to reclaim them to the right way. Such a man may expect to incur the displeasure of every party spirit, and be strenuously opposed in such a worthy cause. Let us persevere, and success will crown our endeavors. Our works will follow us in time and in eternity; *in time*, for posterity will profit from our labors; *in eternity*, for God, we believe, will own them.

Objection. If what you state be correct, why has the Church been permitted to err so long?

Answer. Why has the church been permitted to be driven into the wilderness for 1260 years? Why was the apostacy of which Paul prophecied, ever permitted to take place? Will any say that the Church of Rome is the church driven by the dragon into the wilderness for 1260 years? No Protestant will say it, and no Roman Catholic will own it. Will any one say, that any one of the existing sects is that church? Not one can or will say it. Who then, and where is that church? It is composed of all the humble obedient believers of every name. They are all in the wilderness of the confusion existing among the various, jarring, and discordant sects, called in the Revelations, *Babylon*, which literally signifies *confusion*. All think the 1260 years are nearly closed. The signs of the times are visible to such as are observant. The Christians in this wilderness of confusion are beginning to see and lament their situation, and the evils of partyism, of human authoritative creeds and party names. In fact they begin to make a solemn move out of Babylon, or out of the wilderness, leaning, not on man, but on their beloved, whom they acknowledge alone as their leader. They will be *one* in spite of all opposition from earth or hell. Vain are their opposing efforts! The weak and fearful

may, for a while, be influenced by the fear of man and the terrors of expulsion from their party; they may dread the dangers and evils of a reform, pourtrayed in glowing colors by their leaders; yet on earth shall God's will be done as it is in heaven. In heaven all are one; so shall it be on earth among the saints.

Obj. If you be correct, why have the great, the learned, and the pious, so long and so universally erred?

Answer. These characters are found in every sect, teaching and defending contradictory doctrines, with all confidence and boldness, and endeavouring to build up and establish their various parties. Are they all right? Are they not all wrong, the Bible being judge? Various reasons might be given; but we think that hinted at in the objection, is not among the least. It is this: some great, learned, and pious man, in his speculations, has invented a doctrine; this he has published and defended; this is received by many, who may also be great, learned, and pious. Thus the doctrine gains credit through its great, learned, and pious propagators and advocates. *That such were surely right*, has greater weight on the mind than is generally admitted, and inclines it to that way which they have shewn; especially if relatives, friends, or associates are walking in this way. Temporal emolument may influence some, (not the pious) and a popular party many more.

Obj. But why has God blessed them with his saving mercy, if they have so eggregiously erred?

Ans. Because he is God and not man. He is long suffering and forbearing; and in this has set us an example for our imitation. Alas! how far all have erred from this copy! Had the Lord confined his favors to one sect only, then the conclusion would almost be irresistible, that *that* sect was only right, and all others wrong. But as he condescends to bestow favors on all, and to commune with the good of every name, surely *we should be imitators of him as dear children.* To act otherwise would be to act ungodly. If we make it an argument, that people are not in error, because God blesses them with his grace and communion, then must

we conclude that no sect is in error; for it is evident that all experience these his blessings. This conclusion is irresistible. Therefore we are obliged to admit the argument fallacious, or to make no distinction between right and wrong, truth and error. This cannot be admitted by any.

This subject shall be farther considered in our subsequent numbers. As we learn the objections made to Christian union, we shall notice them.

EDITOR.

CHILLINGWORT'S THOUGHTS ON HUMAN AUTHORITY.

"This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the words of God—the special senses of men upon the general words of God—and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit, that we can speak of the things of God, better than in the words of God; this deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God from that lattitude and generality, and the understanding of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and his apostles left them, is, and has been, the only fountain of all the schisms of the church, and that which makes them continue the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which tears in pieces, not the coat, but the bowels and members of Christ, *ridente Turca, nec dolente Judæo*, (to the great satisfaction of the Jews and infidels.)

"Take away these walls of separation, and all will quickly be one; take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning of men, for not subscribing to the words of men as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master but him only; let those leave claiming infallibility that have no title to it; and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions. In a word, take away tyranny, which is the Devil's instrument to support errors and superstitions, and impieties

in the several parts of the world, which could not long otherwise withstand the power of truth; I say, take away tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to scripture only; and, as rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may be well hoped by God's blessing, that universal liberty thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity."

CHILDREN CATECHETICALLY TAUGHT TO SIN.

"*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*" As a perfect contrast to this precept of our Saviour, I shall bring to view a precept of Mr Thomas Vincent, contained in his "Explicatory Catechism, or Explanation of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism:"

"*Question.* What should we judge of them that deny that there are three distinct persons in one Godhead?

"*Answer.* 1. We should judge them to be *blasphemers*, because they speak against the ever glorious God, who hath set forth himself in this distinction in the scriptures. 2. To be *damnable heretics;* this doctrine of the distinction of persons in the unity of essence being a *fundamental truth*, denied by Sabellians, Arians, Photinians, and of late by Socinians, who war against the Godhead of Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost; among whom the Quakers are to be numbered, who deny this distinction."

It may be doubted whether there is any doctrine by which one denomination of Christians has been thus distinguished from another, which is so dangerous to the souls of men, as this *practical* doctrine taught by Mr. Vincent.

This mode of teaching children to violate one of the plainest precepts of the Messiah, will account for the bitter enmities which have existed between different denominations of Christians—for the vile and abusive language with which sermons and various publications have been disgraced—for the odious opinions which have been entertained of all who have dissented from a

barbarous phraseology, which has been preferred to the simple language of the gospel, for the perils with which free inquiry has been accompanied, for the slow progress of light and truth, and for the various modes of persecution.

By this one passage in Mr Vincent's catechism, probably thousands and tens of thousands have been taught and influenced to regard the whole of *five sects* of Christians as "*blasphemers*" and "*damnabte heretics.*" Yet of these five sects, whom children have been thus taught to judge, abhor, and calumniate, there have probably been thousands and tens of thousands who will be acknowledged by the Saviour as his humble followers.

Can it be wonderful that people who have been thus taught from their cradles, should be unable to see evidences of piety and goodness in persons of any denomination, which they have been accustomed to abhor? Or that they should be able to prove, to their own satisfaction, that men of their own party are much better than other people? Or that they should mistake a burning and malignant zeal against their opponents, for the fervor of that *love which worketh no ill to its neighbor?*

If it were my aim to ruin children, to lead them into a course of self deception, and to render them a curse to community, I hardly know what method would be better adapted to accomplish the purpose, than to infuse into their minds such sentiments and such prejudices against Christians of every denomonation but their own.

[*Christian Register.*

EXTRACT FROM DR. CHANNING'S DEDICATION SERMON.

"Trinitarians imagine, that there is one view of their system, pecularly fitted to give peace and hope to the sinner, and consequently to promote gratitude and love. It is this: They say, it provides an *infinite* substitute for the sinner, than which nothing can give greater relief to the burdened conscience. Jesus, being the second person in the trinity, was able to make infinite satisfaction for sin; and what, they ask, in Unitarianism, can compare with this? I have time only

for two brief replies. And first, this doctrine of an infinite satisfaction, or, as it is improperly called, of an infinite atonement, subverts, instead of builds up, hope, because it argues infinite severity in the government which requires it. Did I believe, what Trinitarianism teaches, that not the least transgression, not even the first sin of the dawning mind of the child, could be remitted without an infinite expiation, I should feel myself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written like Draco's, in blood; and instead of thanking the sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, I should shudder at the attributes, which render this expedient necessary. It is commonly said that an infinite atonement is needed to make due and deep impressions of the evil of sin. But he who framed all souls and gave them their susceptibilities, ought not to be thought so wanting in goodness and wisdom, as to have constituted a universe, which demands so dreadful and degrading a method of enforcing obedience, as the penal sufferings of a God. This doctrine of an infinite substitute, suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its monstrous character is overlooked. Let me then set it before you in new terms, and by a new illustration; and if in so doing, I may wound the feelings of some who may hear me, I beg them to believe, that I do it with pain, and from no impulse but a desire to serve the cause of truth.—Suppose then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you, that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in the room of the offenders, an infinite being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity; suppose him to declare, that this execution was appointed, as a most conspicuous and terrible manifestation of God's justice and wrath, and of the infinite woe denounced by his law; and suppose him to add, that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight, as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue. Would you

not tell him, that he calumniated his Maker? Would you not say to him, that this central gallows threw gloom over the universe; that the spirit of a government, whose very acts of pardon were written in such blood, was terror, not parental love; and that the obedience which needed to be upheld by this horrid spectacle, was nothing worth? Would you not say to him, that even you, in this infancy and imperfection of your being, were capable of being wrought upon by nobler motives, and of hating sin through more generous views; and that much more the angels, those pure flames of love, need not the gallows and an executed God, to confirm their loyalty? You would all so feel at such teaching as I have supposed; and yet how does this differ from the popular doctrine of atonement? According to this doctrine, we have an Infinite Being sentenced to suffer as a substitute the death of the cross, a punishment more ignominious and agonizing than the gallows, a punishment reserved for slaves and the vilest malefactors; and he suffers this punishment that he may show forth the terrors of God's law, and strike a dread of sin through the universe. I am indeed aware that multitudes, who profess this doctrine, are not accustomed to bring it to their minds distinctly in this light; that they do not ordinarily regard the death of Christ, as a criminal execution, as an infinitely dreadful infliction of justice, as intended to show, that, without an infinite satisfaction, they must hope nothing from God. Their minds turn by a generous instinct from these appalling views, to the love, the disinterestedness, the moral grandeur and beauty of the sufferer; and through such thoughts they make the cross a source of peace, gratitude, love and hope; thus affording a delightful exemplification of the power of the human mind to attach itself to what is good and purifying in the most irrational system. But let none on this account say, that we misrepresent the doctrine of atonement, the primary and essential idea of which is, *the public execution of a God*, for the purpose of satisfying justice and awakening a shuddering dread of sin. [*To be continued.*]

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

VOL. I.] GEORGETOWN, KY. APRIL, 25, 1827. [No. 6.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—No. III.

After constituting with prayer, and choosing a moderator and clerk, we proceeded to draught a circular letter to the congregations formerly under our care, which is as follows:

DEAR BRETHREN: By the time this letter shall have reached you, you will, no doubt, have heard, that a separation has taken place between us, and the Synod of Kentucky, and the presbyteries to which we belonged. The reasons which induced us to withdraw, you see in the above copy of our protest; which reasons we intend more fully to unfold as soon as we can obtain the minutes of Synod, and those of the Washington presbytery, which are referred to in said protest. But lest you should form an improper opinion of the nature or kind of separation, we take the liberty of giving you a short statement of it. We do not desire, nor do we consider ourselves to be separated from the presbyterian Church, as christians, whether ministers or people; we still wish to continue united to them in the bonds of love; we will admit to communion as formerly, and desire to be admitted. It is not our design to form a party. We have only withdrawn from the jurisdiction of those bodies, with whom we stood connected, because we plainly perceived that, while that connexion subsisted, we could not enjoy the liberty of reading, studying and explaining the word of God for ourselves, without constant altercation and strife of words to no profit. We pass no uncharitable censures on those reverend bodies for their strict adherence to their standards; but as we are accountable to God for ourselves, so we must act for our-

selves as in the sight of God; and can own no standard of faith but the word of God; and we desire ever to look to him for his Spirit of wisdom to lead us into all truth. Brethren, we wish to pay all due deference to the Confession of Faith, and other writings of our pious fathers; but we plead a privilege, which is granted in the Confession of Faith, chap. 1, sec. 9, 10, as we mentioned in our protest; that the infallible rule of interpreting Scripture, is not the Confession of Faith, nor any human writings whatever, but the Scripture itself. On this ground we have attempted, and still mean to proceed to hold forth the word of life, peace and pardon to sinners, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant. But as we are by some suspected of having departed from the true doctrines of the Gospel, we design as soon as convenient, to explain to the public our views of the Gospel. In the mean time we are determined, by the grace of God, to preach the Gospel, and administer ordinances as formerly.

"*And now, brethren, we commend you to God, and to the word of his grace; which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Farewell.*"

Late in the evening, after our adjournment, the following resolution was handed to us from Synod.

"On motion, Resolved, that Messrs. Rannels, Houston and Kemper be a committee to wait upon Messrs. Marshall, Dunlavy, M'Nemar, Stone and Thompson, to enquire of them, what objections they have to our Confession of Faith, or to any part of it, which they have in their remonstrance declared they could not submit to be judged by; and that they transmit said objections to us in writing on to-morrow morning, or before the Synod rises."

As several of our members were under a necessity of leaving town that night, we concluded to meet next morning, to take into consideration the above resolution. The result of which meeting you will see by the following letter, addressed by us to the Moderator of Synod:

"*Rev'd. and Dear Sir*:—We received your resolution from a member of your committee, requesting us to give

you a statement of our objections against some parts of the Confession of Faith. We have taken the matter into consideration and resolved to comply. But it is out of our power to state them to you as soon as you require: but will without fail give you a statement at your next annual session. A party is not our aim; and this we hope to evince to you, and to the world at your next session. In the mean time we design to proceed no farther than circumstances may require. Brethren, you are in our hearts to live and die with you: our hearts are bound to you in love. We hope your intentions in doing what you have done, were good; but we still believe as stated in our protest. In the mean time let us unite our prayers to our common Lord and Father, that he would in his kind providence heal our divisions, and unite us more closely in the bonds of love.

"We remain, dear brethren, as ever, united to you in heart and affection.

"Robert Marshall,
"John Dunlavy,
"Richard M'Nemar,
"Barton W. Stone,
"John Thompson."

This letter was sent forward to Synod as soon as possible on the same day of our meeting; but they did not wait for an answer, for before its arrival, they had passed a vote of suspension; an account of which you will see hereafter.

Shortly after our return home, we were followed by heralds proclaiming our suspension from the ministerial office.

In some of our congregations the minute containing that extraordinary act, was publicly read, and handed to us; which is as follows:

"On motion, the following resolution was introduced, and on a vote being taken, was carried in the affirmative. Whereas, Messrs. Robt. Marshall, John Dunlavy, Richard M'Nemar, Barton W. Stone, and John Thompson, have declared themselves no longer members of our body, or under our jurisdiction, or that of our presbyteries;

and whereas, it appears from their remonstrance laid before Synod, that they have seceded from the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, and no more wish to be united with us, until we adopt a more liberal plan respecting human creeds and confessions; and, whereas, a committee has been appointed, seriously and affectionately to converse with the above members, in order if possible to reclaim them to the doctrines and standards of our church, which committee has proved entirely unsuccessful; moreover, whereas said gentlemen came into Synod and informed us that they had constituted themselves into a separate presbytery, and have refused to comply with every solicitation to return to their duty, but persist in their scismatic disposition: Therefore, Resolved, that Synod do, and they hereby do, solemnly suspend Messrs. Robert Marshall, John Dunlavy, Barton W. Stone, Richard M'Nemar and John Thompson from the exercise of the functions of the Gospel ministry, until sorrow and repentance for their scism be manifested; leaving it however to the several presbyteries, to which the above members may have belonged, to restore them as soon as they give satisfactory evidence of repentance; and their congregations are hereby declared vacant.

"On motion, Resolved, that commissioners go to the several congregations where Messrs. Marshall, Dunlavy, M'Nemar, Stone and Thompson have statedly preached, to declare those congregations, not before vacated, now vacant; and state the conduct of Synod, respecting those men, and exhort to peace and unity; and that the commissioners be as follows, *viz.* Messrs. Shannon and Lyle, to Bethel and Blue-spring; Messrs. Rannels and Howe, to Cane-ridge and Concord; Mr. Blythe, to Eagle creek; Mr. William Robinson, to Springfield and Turtle creek.

"A true copy,

"JAMES WELSH, S. C. S. K."

Here it is worthy of our most serious attention, to observe that the Synod had no legal grounds to proceed further against us after our withdrawing from under their jurisdiction. For if the power of suspension is

not legally vested in a Synod, their assuming and exercising it, must appear indeed an empty flourish. We would humbly enquire upon what ground they proceeded? Their standard affords no pretext for such a step: the power of Synod is limited to certain bounds which you will see, *Form of Gov.* chap. x, sec. 2; you see not a word there of suspension: their highest authority is to advise the presbytery in such a case, (*Form of Proc.* chap. ii, sec. 11). It is unnecessary to prove a negative. We say they had no such authority from the word of God, or the form of Government. But seeing much has been said in support of their authority in that case, it is necessary we should pay a particular attention to the subject.

If our suspension be orderly and according to the will of God, the consequences are serious indeed. We are bound on earth and bound in Heaven; cast out of the vineyard as fruitless, withered branches; in no better circumstances than Heathens and publicans; running unsent; and all that bid us *God speed*, must be partakers of our evil deeds. On the contrary, if we have been called of God to minister in Holy things, and have done nothing to forfeit that authority; and if any man, or set of men, should rise up and command us to be silent, and forbid the people to hear us; the consequences may be serious to them in the end. It is certain Synod had no authority from the Book of discipline to suspend us; their authority then must have been either from the word of God, or from such existing circumstances as required them to dispense with order.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

John 20, 30, 31. And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

In this text are contained several important ideas.—1. The first idea suggested is that the Scriptures, or

written word, is the cause and foundation of our faith.

2. That the object of our faith is, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

3. That the Scriptures afford sufficient evidence of this fact to produce faith.

4. That eternal life is the fruit of this faith.

To each of these ideas we will briefly attend.

1—That the Scriptures, or written word, is the cause and foundation of faith.

This proposition appears to us a maxim in theology, and therefore needs no proof. But lest a doubt should exist in any mind, we will introduce a few testimonies. Jesus said to the Jews, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me." John 5, 46. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," Rom. 10, 17. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, who shall believe on me through their word." John 17, 20.

There are not a few honest, though mistaken men, who reject this plain truth. They affirm that faith in Jesus, is an immediate gift from Heaven; or an immediate operation of the spirit; and therefore, the written word is not the cause nor foundation of it. In proof of this strange position they introduce a number of detached Scriptures, and labour to make their views accord with their systems of divinity, and with Christian experience. They continually refer to Eph. 2, 8. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God," and Heb. 12, 2, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith." Waiving all criticism, we all agree that he is the giver, author and finisher of the Gospel, which is the foundation of faith, and which is the revelation of himself, his will and his plan of redemption. This Gospel or revelation, he has confirmed by signs, wonders and miracles, which are written that we might believe. When we receive the evidence, we believe the fact, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. With propriety we may say, that God is the giver of this faith; for had he not given us this revelation, with its divine evidences, we had never be-

lieved. I inform my neighbors that at a certain time and place, I saw A kill B. They believe. They have faith. Who gave them this faith? who was the author and finisher of it? All will acknowledge that I was the giver and author of it. How? Simply by stating the fact. "So faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

To say that the Scriptures are not the cause and foundation of our faith, but some immediate, mysterious operation of the spirit on the mind. involves so many insurmountable difficulties, that we are obliged to reject it.

1—It makes the Gospel the greatest curse that was ever imposed on the world. For the Gospel requires us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, John 3, 2, 3. Unbelief is declared to be a damning sin, the sin of the world, and enhances the condemnation and punishment of the unbelieving. John 3, 18. Matt. 11, 21, 22. An impossibility is then required of the sinner, and an aggravated punishment, everlasting punishment inflicted on him!! Is this the Gospel of God?

2—It veils the glory of the divine character and government, as revealed in the Scriptures, and manifested in Jesus. What father so unreasonable, so cruel, as to command his little son to pluck up a large oak, and in wrath beat him to death for not doing it? Would not every rational being execrate the wretch? Would not every child of this monster dread his cruelty, and endeavor to fly from his presence? And dare we apply this character to God and his good government? They surely do it, who say that the sinner can no more believe in Jesus, than create a world, or stop the sun in his course. Should God command every son and daughter of Adam to make a new world, and inflict everlasting punishment upon every one, who failed to do it; would not every one cry out with one voice, it is an unreasonable and cruel command? But if *to believe* be as impossible as *to create* a world, where is the difference? There is none. So habituated are many to such language that they have never seen the blasphemy contained in it; nor have they considered the horrors, infused into many minds, of such a government.

3—Were the doctrine against which we plead true, it certainly was known by the great Teacher from Heaven, who is called the truth. If so, how could it be said consistently with his spotless character, that *he marvelled at their unbelief?* How could he marvel if he knew that it was as impossible for them to believe as to create a world? What should we think of him, had he commanded them to make a new world, and then have marvelled that they did not do it?

4—If man cannot believe the Scriptures from the evidence given in them, they are useless to him, as not being the cause nor foundation of his faith. I was in a neighborhood, not long since, and went with the crouds to hear a very celebrated preacher. With great confidence he addressed the listening multitudes on the subject of the total depravity of man. To illustrate his subject he introduced the figure of a dead corpse floating rapidly on the floods of the Niagara, and in a minute must be borne over the dread precipice, and ingulphed below. The corpse saw no danger, feared none, made no exertion to escape, nor called for help. The preacher then supposed that God immediately touched him into life. The poor creature now saw his danger, now was filled with fear, now exerted every power to escape, and cried with every breath for help. This was the representation of the sinner's case. This was the burden of his sermon. The same evening I listened to another preacher in a private circle applauding in the highest terms the discourse we had heard. Having exhausted this subject, he commenced another, descanting on the great utility of Bible Societies, and the happy prospects of sending the Bible to the Heathen nations. The contradiction was so obvious, I could not longer forbear; for I had sat a silent stranger till now. I begged the liberty of suggesting a difficulty, which oppressed my mind, and wished light on the subject. If the doctrine we have heard to-day be correct, of what use is the Bible to the Heathen nations, or to sinners amongst us? They are as dead as the corpse floating down the Niagara; they cannot see, understand, nor believe it, till God

by immediate divine power, makes them alive. Can he not as easily do this divine work for the Pagan nations without the Bible, as with it? Why then such an immense expence and trouble, to send them the Bible? It can only increase the condemnation and punishment of the reprobate part of them, and the elect are made alive without it. I farther remarked, that the doctrine we have herd to day, stands in direct opposition to the Scriptures of truth; for they every where represent divine life as the fruit, or consequence of faith, and expressly declare that, *he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

5—If the doctrine against which we plead be correct, we cannot see the sincerity of God in expostulating with the sinner in such language as the following. "Why will you die?" "What more could I have done for my vineyard, that I have not done?" &c. Might not the sinner justly reply—The reason of my death is, because thou dost not give me faith? Thou mightest have done more for me, for thou mightest have given me faith, or afforded me that divine operation which produces it.

6—If faith be the gift of God in the sense, against which we contend, then it follows, that God in his favors to the children of Adam, is partial. For if all are equally dead, and it is equally impossible for any to believe, then it is demonstrably plain, that if God gives faith to one, and withholds it from another, that he is a partial being; and how he can condemn to everlasting punishment the poor sinner for not having faith, we confess our entire ignorance: nay, more; we confess, that to us it appears directly contrary to his character, his government, and his Gospel, He is frequently declared as *no respecter of persons.* "The wisdom that cometh from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." James 3, 17. If by *the wisdom* in the text he understood the Gospel, or the divine effects produced by it in the mind, it matters not; God is the source of it; and certainly approves of it; partiality must, therefore, be contrary to his nature and

his Gospel; and the wisdom that teaches it did not descend from above.

7—To plead that man cannot believe the Scriptures, is to dishonor them, as well as their author. For it is plainly implied, either that they give evidence insufficient to demand our faith, or that our capacities are insufficient to receive it. This is the strong hold of the deist, from which he cannot be dislodged by those who use the same arguments with himself. Christians should blush to allege such reasons, which are calculated to confirm the infidel in his infidelity—to lull the sinner to sleep—to predjudice him against God, for commanding impossibilities, and then damning to eternal fire for not performing it.

What has induced many good, but mistaken men, to plead for this notion is, because it so well accords with that system of religion which they have received as truth. Were they to receive the plain truth, that man is capable of believing his God, it would dissolve their system. Therefore they reject it. They thus reason; mankind are represented as dead—a dead man cannot act—but faith is an act—therefore, man cannot believe—he must be made alive before he can perform the act of faith. This reasoning is in perfect accordance with their system; but perfectly contrary to the word of God. The Scriptures represent mankind as dead, and yet alive—dead to God and divine things; but alive to the world and things below. When they are converted, they are represented as alive to God, and dead to the world. This change from life to death, was effected in Adam by unbelief, the sin of the world; and this change from death to life is effected in the sinner by faith. Adam in a perfect state of holiness was as morally disqualified to disbelieve God, as his unholy children are to believe him. Yet fact proves that Adam did disbelieve his God unto death; and fact and Scripture prove, that his unholy children do believe unto life, and salvation. "He that believeth—shall be saved." "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. 4, 5. "The

hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." John 5, 25. "Hear, and your soul shall live," &c. This subject shall be hereafter more fully discussed. From these plain declarations, it is evident, that the sinner is not so dead, but that he can hear, and believe unto righteousness, life and salvation; and that these blessings are received by none prior to their believing; for "He that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

They farther argue that man is blind, and that they cannot understand the Scriptures, and therefore cannot believe, before God by some mysterious and immediate operation on the mind, enables them to see and understand. The Apostle Paul, in Heb. 11, particularly exposes the fallacy of this notion. There he defines the faith by which we are made just, to be *the evidence of things not seen;* and he confirms his definition by many examples, as "Through faith, we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God." Paul and his cotemporaries had not seen the worlds made, yet they believed the fact, from the testimony of the Scriptures. "By faith Noah being warned of God of things *not seen as yet*, moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his house." Had he acted on the principle, against which we contend, he would have waited till *he saw the flood*, and then it would have been too late to prepare an ark; and thus he and his house would have been swept off with the world of the ungodly.—We awfully fear that while the sinner is cavilling, and saying as taught, that he cannot believe before he receives spiritual sight or perception, that a more awful deluge of fire, will sweep him to endless ruin. Let him remember that faith depends not on sight, but on evidence, as Paul has taught us. This doctrine he learned from his Lord, who said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20, 29.

They also labor to make their views of faith accord with the experience of Christians. I remember, says one, that once I would have given a world, if at my dis-

posal, to believe in Jesus; but I could not. Should this person be asked, how much he would have given to believe in Mahomet? He would readily have answered; not a cent. Why? Because he believed Mahomet could not save him. Why give so much to believe in Jesus? Because he believed Jesus was able to save him? This is the fact. He already believed, but had not received the fruits of faith, as love, joy, peace, and the witnessing spirit. This was what he wanted, and for which he would have given a world. By not distinguishing between faith and its fruits, many have been mistaken on this point.

We are told that the faith for which we plead is a natural faith. We are assured it is not supernatural. If it were it could not in justice be required of natural men, it would be infinitely above our reach. The inspired John said, "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." John 5, 9. Thus are we taught that we believe God in the same manner that we believe men; that is, by testimony. The Apostle Paul has given us a perfect chain on this subject. "It is written, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?—So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. 10, 13, 17. The first link is *the word*—the second is the preaching of it—the third is hearing it—the fourth is believing it—the fifth is calling upon the Lord—the last is salvation. This supersedes all human systems and notions; and if attended to, would eventuate in eternal life, and complete salvation.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

COMMUNICATED, FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

From the best authorities it appears that the Church of Christ was one in communion and fellowship as Christians, till the year of our Lord, 381. Till this period,

they generally (with few exceptions) believed in one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father. On this belief converts were admitted into the church, and the saints enjoyed communion one with another. It is true that during that period there were different opinions and sharp contentions among them on several subjects; but they continued in the unity of the spirit, and in fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in prayer. In 325 a creed was begun by the council of Nice, but was not finished till 381 at Constantinople. Then the trinitarian creed was established and made the term of communion, and all who would not subscribe it were excluded from the church. They who were cast out formed new sects, new creeds, new terms of communion, and new names. In this situation, so lamentable and so degrading to Christianity, and so pleasing to the enemy of all righteousness, has the church of Christ continued to this day.

Shall we be reprobated and cast out from the communion of the saints, as damnable heretics?—we, who a few years ago made the first stand as a society against human authoritative creeds, names, and sectarian terms of communion; and are yet making every effort in our power to restore the unity of saints, so desirable and glorious? Be it so. They may cast us out from their communion; but they cannot exclude us from the favor of God, or shut against us the gates of heaven; nor can they take from us the consolation that we are labouring to do the will of God, and that his truth will ultimately prevail, and sweep from the church those party creeds, names, and terms of Christian communion, which have so long disgraced it. Our hopes brighten from the frequent news, that the plan of union on gospel principles, is taking effect in different parts of the world, and among different sects. Like fire, the harder the storm the more furiously will it burn; so this divine principle will spread with the increasing storm of opposition.

My brethren, let us unweariedly persevere in the good work, and faint not. Let us prove by our works, as well as by our words, that we are what we profess to

be, *Christians*. This will be more effectual in restoring primitive order, than volumes of divinity without it. May God prosper Zion's cause. Amen. T. S.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Brother Stone:—I noticed in a late number of the Baptist Recorder, a communication over the signature of Edmund Waller, by which the public is informed, that he tried, condemned, and actually BURNT the translation of the New Testament lately published by A. Campbell. This reminded me of the circumstance of Herostratus burning the temple of Ephesus, who confessed, when put to the torture, that his object was to transmit his name to posterity. Whether Mr Waller was influenced by the same motive, I am unable to say. If fame was his object, it would be more honourable for him to be known for his deeds of virtue, rather than for those of rashness and intolerance. Simply to be known is no advantage. "It is a privilege," says Mr Johnson, "not less enjoyed by Constantine than Timocreon of Rhodes; of whom we only know from his epitaph, that he had eaten many a meal, drunk many a flaggon, and uttered many a reproach."

But *with what judgment* did Mr Waller judge the book? He informs that he gave it one reading, compared it with the one he has loved ever since he was thirteen, and condemned it; but he was merciful enough to put off the day of execution for two or three months. He does not understand the Greek language; therefore was not qualified to compare it with the original, nor to sit in judgment upon it. If he made king James' translation the standard, he ought certainly to have been able to show that that translation was correct, and to have given us evidence of its correctness, and the incorrectness of the other, which he condemned. But admitting he had known the new translation to be incorrect in some things, (as all translations commonly are) would not prudence have dictated a different course from that pursued by him? I am persuaded it was not the spirit of Christianity, revealed in that version, which Mr Waller has

loved so long. I do not mean by this that Mr W. is not a Christian; for I have a better opinion of his religion than his own language imports; for when he was pleading in the last Elkhorn association for the propriety of holding to the name *Baptist*, and rejecting that of *Christian*, one of his principal arguments was, that he knew he was a *Baptist*, but did not know that he was a *Christian*.

There are many who appear to have a zeal, but not according to knowledge; and the greatest zealots for *orthodoxy* frequently trample under foot the grand characteristics of religion in their efforts to preserve what they call the essentials of the gospel, and in lending their aid to confessions of faith, the sinking guardians of clerical dominion. The truth of God needs not the wrath of man to support it. It stands confirmed by incontestible evidence. They, who wish to glorify Jesus, should manifest the spirit of truth in the defence of the gospel. When a person manifests an intolerant spirit, and opposition to a calm and friendly investigation of their views, it is a reasonable supposition that they are actuated by the spirit of faction, rather than by the love of truth; and that they possess more bigotry and implicit faith than genuine religion, "which," says a learned pædo-baptist, "is ever found a reasonable service and as completely amiable as the other is hateful.

A FRIEND TO N. TESTAMENT *orthodoxy*.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

An account of the exclusion of Samuel Simpson and Dr. J. S. Davis, from the regular Baptist Church, written by the Doctor.

In every occurrence of human affairs, that implicates the character of individuals, there are some circumstances that may be construed to the detriment of those concerned, by the enemies of social enjoyment, and eternal happiness. Therefore I will give the public a concise narrative of the cause and circumstances of the exclusion of Samuel Simpson and myself from the Regular Baptist Church. I shall also intersperse a few ob-

servations on the conduct of the church, with a few remarks on our reasons given for objecting to their principles. The reasons which have induced us to this publication, are, that the Baptists point us out as excommunicants, without stating the cause of our exclusion; and for this reason many refuse to publish meetings for Simpson.

When we first joined the Baptists, it was in the time of a revival under the ministry of Elder Isaac Hodgen and others, whose names we remember with warm and grateful affection. The doctrines they preached were simple: *repent and be baptized* were urged with power and success. There were no cavillings about religious tenets; every heart was inflamed with zeal for the Redeemer's kingdom. Each dark vale and secret recess, resounded with the prayers of the saints for the outpouring of God's spirit, and that benighted souls might enjoy the light of the gospel. But alas! these happy seasons came to an end, and the spirit of the world succeeded. The church having lost the reviving spirit, began to be very tenacious of their peculiar doctrines, eulogizing their confessions of faith, and anathematizing the doctrines of other Christian sects. This led Simpson and myself to examine and compare the doctrines of our Church with those taught in the Bible. We soon found their disagreement, and were convinced that it was dangerous to confide in any thing as a rule of faith and practice, except the word of God. This at first we were afraid to avow, but becoming more confirmed in the belief that the scriptures were all that we were required to believe and to be governed by, we began boldly to advance this doctrine, and Simpson being a licenced preacher publicly preached and defended it. This, with his disbelief of the church covenant, caused the leading members of the church to talk with him. They asked him whether he designed leaving them? He replied, he was willing to live with them and enjoy his belief of the scriptures.

This they could not long bear, for they soon perceived that our doctrine, or *heresy* as they called it, was fast

gaining ground, and if not speedily checked, might overthrow the church. They therefore called Simpson to an account for his doctrine (I at that time not living in the neighborhood.) The Church covenant was presented to him to fellowship, which he refused. It was then proposed and agreed to defer acting on the case till next Church meeting, that they might have time to investigate the matter thoroughly. Of this I received information, and determined to attend, and defend our principles; for it was agreed that the question should be discussed in the church by each party.

The church met according to appointment, at Hopewell, August 7, 1824, with their pastor, J. King, and two assisting ministers, Lewis Ellison and William Burbridge. Simpson and myself attended, humbly praying to be corrected if wrong; but if right, that our opposers might be convinced of their error. We hoped to find the church in the same spirit, but we were sadly disappointed. Our opposers treated us unkindly, and spoke in a manner as peremptory and dictatorial, as a Spanish inquisitor. It made the blood run chill in my veins to hear fallible men speak as authoritatively and as positively, as though they held the keys of death and hell, and were appointed to judge the world! When the reference to Simpson's case was read, the pastor, being moderator, asked him whether he fellowshiped the church covenant? Simpson answered, he did not, and began to make some remarks relative to the case, but was soon called to order. I began to suspect that we should not be permitted to make a defence; and my suspicions were soon confirmed; for the moderator began to remark how dangerous it was to disbelieve their articles of faith. This he did in the language and tone of those who enforce the belief of their doctrines by fire and sword Simpson frequently commenced speaking, but was as often ordered to silence. He soon saw it useless to attempt to say any thing, for he plainly saw they were determined in their course. They appeared doubtful of the correctness of their principles, because they refused to have them scrutinized by men, as intel-

ligent as themselves. They well knew the foundation of our defence, which was, that all men are fallible and liable to err, and that no man nor set of men could write any thing as correct as the scriptures themselves: that these were sufficiently explicit in giving directions for faith, practice, and government; and therefore superceded the necessity of man-made creeds and confessions of faith.

They hurried the business as if they were afraid their rash acts would kindle the indignation of Simpson's personal friends. It was soon motioned and seconded, to take the question. It was put in the following manner: "All those who do not fellowship Mr Simpson, for not fellowshiping the church covenant, that binds us together in Christ, hold up the right hand." I felt awfully strange to hear men, professing to be guardians of the souls of mortals, attempting to impress on the minds of the young, unthinking, and illiterate part of the congregation the horrid idea, that their church covenant bound them together in Christ! Four members voted against Simpson, and two for him, James Simpson and myself. Without farther ceremony the clerk was ordered to record our names on the church book, as excluded for disbelieving the church covenant, with the epithet of *heretic* attached to us. Thus we were tried and condemned as *heretics* by this ecclesiastical court in the presence of a large assembly, without allowing the privilege of defence.

When excluded we asked the church to give us an instrument in writing, stating the cause of our exclusion. The moderator refused, saying, they would bear no man's expences from their church to another. We then retired, consoling ourselves that they could not exclude us from the kingdom of heaven. I hope the example of these clergymen will show the world the disposition prevailing among the creed supporters. I hope the time is not not far distant, when all the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, will abandon all human creeds and adopt the Bible as the man of their counsels, and walk hand in hand to the mansions of eternal felicity.

L. S. DAVIS.

The Elders and brethren of the Church of Christ, north of Kentucky, assembled in Conference, to the Christian Churches in Kentucky.

DEAR BRETHREN:

We have just closed our annual meeting of conferenc: in love, peace and unity. A considerable number of elders, preachers, and messengers met together. Many of the letters, addressed to us by the churches, gave us cheering accounts of the march of truth, and its glorious conquests over poor sinners, in subduing their rebellion, and bringing them in humble, cheerful submission, to the government of heaven. All the churches appear to anticipate happier days, and are joyfully waiting for their approach.

The church on Flat run, recommended to us our brother William Parker, for ordination to the ministry. We concurred with that Church that it was proper, and appointed brethren to attend to this matter in that church, of which he is a member. It was proposed for our consideration, By whom shall this brother be ordained? By the church? or by the church and eldership conjunctly? or by the eldership alone? After mature deliberation on the subject, it was agreed that as we have no account in the New Testament of ordination to the ministry being done by the church alone, or by the church in conjunction with the eldership; but that as we have particular accounts of its being done by the eldership or presbytery, therefore the eldership alone with the recommendation of the church, had the authority to ordain, when they concurred with the church in regard to the qualifications of the person to be ordained.

It was deemed proper to address the churches a letter, embracing this and several other particular subjects, which we consider important. We wish you to understand more fully our views of conferences—of the independence and order of Christian churches—of bringing up our children in the way they should go—of aiding your labouring preachers—and of the propriety of coolescing in the glorious work of colonizing the

free people of color. On each of these topics we wish to address you freely.

As a conference we disclaim legislation for the churches *in toto*. We also disclaim the right of adjudicating on any case in the government of the church. Our sole business is to confer together on the state of religion among the churches, to arrange our appointments so as to supply the churches which may need our aid in preaching, administering ordinances and attending to the ordination of elders, to worship together, to strengthen the bonds of union, and to encourage each other in the work of the Lord.

We consider the churches independent one of another, and that each church has the right to govern itself according to the New Testament. It is the highest and only court, ordained by our Lord in his kingdom below, and from which there is no appeal on earth. Every church in gospel order, has a bishop, overseer, or elder.

We are grieved to see such inattention to the religious education of children. Too much care cannot be bestowed on them from the earliest dawn of reason, to instruct the tender mind, and fill it with the treasures of heavenly wisdom in a manner suited to their capacities—to check with mild authority the budding of vicious passions and propensities—to restrain them from every improper course, by prudent counsel; and if this fail, to correct them in mercy, labouring to impress it on their minds that duty and love impel you to act thus towards them. To correct in an angry, bitter spirit, has never promoted good to the child or servant, but much evil. Let parents always set before their family the pattern of piety, meekness, gentleness, and every virtue. In vain will be our counsels, reproofs, and corrections, if our children see us acting contrary to our own instructions. Teach them by precept and example to devote the Lord's day to religion.

We have long been grieved to see merchandize made of the gospel; yet we are sorry to see the inattention of many churches in aiding their labouring servants in the work of the ministry. They who preach the gospel

should live by it. This is truth. If the avarice of men has perverted and abused it, still it is truth and claim a sacred regard. We wish the churches seriously to lay this to heart, and make provision for such as may need their help, especially for such as devote all their time to the work.

We feel a deep interest in the colonization society. The object of this society is to colonize the free people of colour in a fertile part of Africa, where they may enjoy full liberty, and become messengers of the gospel to that injured quarter of the globe. This subject has arrested the attention of America from Maine to Louisiana. The legislatures of many of the states, as well as our own, have embraced the subject with their warm approbation. Shall we be silent? Shall we be idle? No; let us unite with our countrymen in forming societies wherever we can, and co-operate with the parent society in Washington in this laudable work. Many of this unhappy population have already been borne over the Atlantic to Liberia, where they live happily and freely. Many more are preparing to bid farewell to the shores of America, and hail the land of their forefathers. Be persuaded, brethren, to engage in this work, and thus lay up treasures for yourselves in heaven, and secure the blessing instead of the curses of our greatly injured fellow-creatures. We wish it to be distinctly understood, that the object of this society is not to compel any to emancipate their slaves, but to obtain a fund by which the society may be enabled to colonize those already free, and those who may hereafter be free.

We have altered the time of our annual meeting, which is hereafter to meet on the Friday before the first Lord's day of September. Our next meeting will be at the Republican meeting house, near Lexington, on the Friday before the first Lord's day in September.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

THOS: SMITH, Pres.
THOS: M. ALLEN, Clk.

Indian Creek, March 31, 1827.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Dear Sir:

Permit me, through the medium of your paper, to call the attention of your readers to a *new system* of universalism, which I heard broached in a sermon not long since. For the honor of the divine founder of the Christian religion, and the welfare of Adam's fallen, wretched race, it is humbly hoped that this system has not and never will have many advocates

The preacher was a young man, and seemed to possess fine talents and an accomplished education, and manifested a zeal and earnestness to support his views, worthy of a better cause But alas! what are talents, education zeal and earnestness when misapplied, but powerful engines, to scatter ruin far and wide! But that the reader may judge for himself, I will bring to view some of the most prominent features of the system, which were the following:

1. "The design of God in making mankind, was good—was to make them all happy. If therefore any of them be lost, his design must be frustrated."

2. "To say that God gave a man an agency, by which he might render himself eternally miserable, would be to say, that he made him for that very end—eternal misery."

3. "It was necessary to the happiness of man, that he should know evil, moral and natural, experimentally, that he might know good; because it is (said he) impossible to know any thing without knowing its opposite."

4. "In the view of the Almighty there is no evil in the world—"Whatever is, is right." All things are moving on according to his will."

5. "All rewards and punishments are confined to this life Virtue rewards the virtuous, and vice punishes the vicious. God alone inhabiteth eternity, therefore there can be no room for a devil or a hell there," &c.

Having thus briefly stated the outlines of the preacher's discourse, I shall proceed to the examination of its merits. The first proposition which I have stated, as exhibited by my preacher, is well calculated to deceive the superficial observer, for it seems perfectly reasonable to suppose that God intended us to be happy. But the great error in this proposition lies in this: that it supposes God intended us all to be happy—to be saved *unconditionally, without any respect to our agency* But this we positively and confidently deny; and we defy the world to produce any clear evidence from the Bible, (which must decide all our controversies on religious subjects) to show that God made us to be eternally saved, absolutely or unconditionally. "From the Bible," we say; for we are not disposed to enter into the dreary and lonesome wilderness of vain speculation, where scarce a way-mark is found to direct the traveller; for here, alas! thousands we fear, have lost themselves forever. We choose rather to rove through the fertile and pleasant land of Canaan, which flows with milk and honey, and through which a high way is cast up, which leads along the banks of the ever-flowing river of the water of life, to the city of the living God.

it is difficult however to reason with metaphysical theologians without taking them upon their own ground. But to come to the point. We have asserted that it cannot be proven that God made us to be happy unconditionally. We lay it down as a truth, which we presume but few will deny, that man is a moral agent; that he is a proper subject of moral government; capable of moral good or moral evil, as he pleases. Mr Campbell in his Christian Baptist, vol 4, no 4, p. 76. says: "It is essential to moral good that the agent act freely according to the last dictate, or best dictate of his understanding Moisture is no more essential to vegetation than this liberty of acting according to the views or feelings of the agent is to moral good Please consider that if a rational being were created *incapable* of *disobeying*, he must on that very account be incapable of obeying. He then acts like a mill wheel, in the motions of which there is no choice, no virtue, no vice, no moral good, no moral evil A little reflection is all that is wanting to see that a race of beings created incapable of disobeying (i. e. infallible) are as incapable of moral good or moral evil, of virtue or vice, of rewards or punishments, of happiness or misery, as the stones of the field." So we think And indeed we wonder that a man can draw any other conclusion from all that is said in the book of God, and from all that he beholds in the actual condition of man. What mean all the threatenings and promises of the word of God? Are they not based upon the principle that man is capable of moral good or moral evil? And that, therefore, the threatenings are calculated to prevent the commission of crime, and that the promises are calculated to encourage us to walk in the paths of virtue. In a word, are not all the revelations of God to man, are not all governments, whether human or divine, predicated upon the moral agency of man? Most assuredly they are. And upon any other principle would it not be as proper to enact laws or establish governments to govern the trees of the woods or the beasts of the forest, as man? Most certainly. As it is clear then, that every legislator and every governor of a family, practically acknowledges (whatever may be his theory on the subject) that man is a moral agent; and as all the revelations of God to man are evidently founded upon this principle, away, away, with all your speculations upon the fore-knowledge of God, and his secret and eternal decress. But said my preacher, "to say that God gave man an agency by which he might render himself eternally miserable, is to say in effect that he made him for that very end." Strange idea to be sure. Does not the hypothesis which admits that man has an agency by which he may render himself eternally miserable, also admit that he has an agency by the proper use of which he may be made eternally happy? Certainly. If then man has an agency by which he may prepare himself for eternal misery or eternal happiness, will it not appear that God made him for both eternal happiness and eternal misery? For certainly, if man's possessing an agency by which he may render himself eternally miserable proves that God made him for that very end, his having an agency by which he may render himself eternally happy, will prove that he also made him for endless happiness. So that

our preacher's reasoning proves too much for him, and therefore proves nothing in his favour

But it is thought exceedingly unreasonable that God should punish a sinner eternally for a momentary offence. Aye, indeed! Then reason is to be our guide and not the Bible! For although the Saviour teaches that these (the wicked) "shall go into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Matt. chap 25, and last verse Campbell's translation,) yet the doctrine is unreasonable!! Let the Bible then be burned, as unfit to teach and direct the people of this age of refinement and invention, in their researches after religious truth Let it be considered, like the systems of many ancient philosophers, as suitable only to the dark ages that produced them. nay, as scarcely suitable to any age; and let reason, almighty reason, unfettered, unrestrained, range the vast field of nature, in search of truth; and we may soon expect a system of rational religion, like Mr Owen's, which acknowledges no God, no virtue, no vice in the universe!!

Let no one accuse me of under-rating reason, from any thing I have said, for I believe it is this, chiefly, which exalts man above the brute, that makes him a proper subject of moral government. The provinces of reason in matters of religion, I conceive to be these: 1st, to inquire into the claims of the Bible to divinity. Having done this, and ascertained satisfactorily the justice of those claims, it is the further province of reason to inquire critically into the meaning of the contents of that book. These are provinces of reason as taught in the book. The evidences in support of the divinity of the Bible are addressed to our rationality, and challenge our belief; for says John, "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." The *matter* of that book also is addressed to our rationality, and demands investigation: "Search the Scriptures," says Jesus The "Bereans (says Paul) were more noble than those in Thesalonica, because they searched the scriptures to see whether the things they heard were so"

But shall we set up reason to dictate to the Almighty what is fit and right? Shall we, who are of yesterday, presume to arraign the wisdom, the justice, the reasonableness of his plans, which embrace time and eternity? plans of which we know so little, which at best we only see "through a glass darkly"? Now, it is to reason, thus let loose in the wild fields of speculation, unrestrained by the Bible, that I object And that our preacher has suffered his reason thus to rove unrestrained, will appear in the progress of this investigation.

TIMOTHY.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

VOL. I.] GEORGETOWN, KY. MAY, 25, 1827. [No 7.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—No. IV.

It is difficult to find, from the preceding minute of Synod, what was the real crime alleged against us. They tell you that we have seceded from the Confession of Faith; that they have labored in vain to bring us back to the standards and doctrines of the the church; that we have declared ourselves no longer members of their body, nor under the jurisdiction of Synod or of their presbyteries; that we persisted in our schismatic disposition, &c. It is thought necessary even in a regular charge, that such crimes be alleged as appear from the word of God, to merit the censure of the church. What part of the above mentioned conduct does the word of God criminate? Does it bind us to any human confession of Faith as a standard? Does it absolutely condemn every man as unworthy to preach the Gospel, who is not of their party, and who cannot be brought to that standard, or its peculiar doctrines? If all who differ from them in this matter, are bound to cringe to their authority as sacred, why do they not level their anathemas at others as independent of their standard, as we? They will grant that their authority does not extend to preachers of other persuasions; we ask then how it could *possibly* extend to us, when we declared we were neither of their persuasion, nor under their jurisdiction? Because their committtee failed to reclaim us to the standards and doctrines of the church, is this crime of such a nature, as to warrant suspension? How did Synod know that their committed had used arguments sufficiently powerful to answer this end? Because we had consti-

tuted ourselves into a separate presbytery, is this crime of such magnitude that scripture authorizes such to be suspended? If so, they have no right to preach in the sight of God. To suspend us for constituting a separate presbytery, is not this to cut off at a blow every minister since the Reformation? Luther and his followers constituted a presbytery separate from the Church of Rome; Calvin separated from Luther, and with his followers constituted a separate presbytery; and so have the various sects of Christians ever since. Have these therefore no right to preach, according to the word of God? If not, the Synod in their act of suspension, have virtually suspended themselves and every minister of the reformation since Luther.

"They say we could not be prevailed upon to return to our duty." They take it for granted that it was our duty to return and follow with them; and for the neglect of this duty they pass their act of suspension! We have the judgment of Christ in a similar case. John in the name of his brethren, lodged a verbal complaint against a certain seceder, whom they had taken under *a previous orderly examination*, and silenced, because he followed not with them. *But Jesus said, forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me; for he that is not against us, is on our part.*

The Synod without making any exception suspended all the five preachers for the *crime* of seceding from the Confession of Faith, when it was known by the Transylvania presbytery, which composed a part of the Synod, that one of the five, B. W. Stone, refused to adopt and receive the Confession of Faith at his ordination, farther than he saw it consistent with the word of God This he has satisfactorily proved from living witnesses of the highest respectability, in his Address, p. 33, 34.

In our lincensure and ordination, this question was proposed us "Do you believe the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the word of God; and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?" Which we an-

swered in the affirmative. We had also to promise "to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truths of the Gospel, and the purity and peace of the church; whatsoever persecution or opposition, might arise to us on that account." Form of Gov: Chap: 13 & 14. These things we believed, and were laboring zealously and faithfully to maintain the truths of the *gospel;* not the dogmas of the Confession, for in the light of the gospel we saw many of its doctrines wrong. We were zealously and faithfully engaged to fulfil our engagements, also to maintain the purity and peace of the church; not the Presbyterian church only, but our longing souls embraced the whole church of God on earth. We had learned that purity and peace could not be promoted by jarring creeds and party-spirits; but by love, faith, and obedience. Can it be possible in this enlighted day, that the Ministers of the Presbyterian church are bound to study the purity, peace and unity of their sect alone? and to preach nothing but what is contained in the Confession alone, or what may be agreeable to it? If so, there is an end of liberty among them—they must be Presbyterians always—they must not change one sentiment nor opinion, which they professed to believe at their entrance upon the ministry; nor oppose one doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith! And if any should change their views, they must be hypocrites to profess and preach what they disbelieve; or if honest, they must be deposed from the ministerial functions, excluded from the church, and branded with the crime of perjury, as having rejected the Confession, which they once professed to adopt and receive! Are they not completely imprisoned within their own party walls?

Can it be a crime to withdraw from those with whom we could not remain in peace? No! it is the inalienable right of every moral agent to withdraw from any society, when he thinks the rights of conscience are invaded. If the government of the Presbyterian church deprives its subjects of this privilege, it must be tyrannical. But there is not a sentence in that book to criminate any person for renouncing its author-

ity. Its compilers were too well acquainted with the rights of man, either to deny the privilege of withdrawing, or to inflict censure on any one for doing it. For proof of this, read attentively their introduction to government and discipline.

It may be, however, alleged that there was something criminal in the manner of our withdrawing: the book of discipline admits it to be proper to suspend a minister for *contumacy*, which is a refusal to attend Presbytery, after being three times duly cited, to answer for atrocious crimes of which he is accused. (Forms of proc. Chap. 2, Sec. 8.) This appears to be the only kind of *contumacy* noticed in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church. It may be supposed that a minister thus cited may not only refuse to appear, but may withdarw from under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery. This step is by some called *declinature*. a higher degree of *contumacy*. But does this apply to our case? What was the atrocious crime laid to our charge? Where was the due citation? There was no such thing in the case, and therefore *contumacy*, or *declinature*, is by no means applicable to us.

If any suppose we withdrew, lest we should be charged with atrocious crimes, not yet stated, then our withdrawing could not come under the charge of *declinature*, seeing there was nothing to decline. Besides the only thing of which we were ever accused, and which could give occasion for a future charge, was never determined by the protestant church to be an atrocious crime. If we wished to decline any thing on the occasion, it was vain jangling and strife of words to no profit, on those subjects about which the wisest and best of men differ.

All juridical authority, which any society has over an individual, is in consequence of a voluntary compact tacitly or explicitly made, by which he is connected with that society, and under its laws. When such compact is dissolved, which may be done at any time, by the voluntary act of the individual, the authority ceases of

course. Our voluntary act in putting ourselves under the care of Presbytery, put it in their power to licence, ordain, watch over, censure, suspend or depose, so long as we stood in that connection; but when we voluntarily withdrew, being under no judicial censure, it may be properly said that we withdrew from them all that power over us, which we had given them.

When the church is satisfied that any person is called of God to preach the Gospel, it is their duty to encourage and forward him to the work. This they may do by their presbytery, as representatives of the church, as is common in the Presbyterian government; or they may do it in a church capacity, as is done by the Independent and Baptist churches. When the church or their representatives take a candidate on trial, it is not with a view to call and authorize him to preach, but to inquire into the validity of that call and authority which he professes to have received from God. If they approbate his profession, they express it by the act of licensure. The candidate is then to make *full proof of his ministry*, whether it be from Heaven or of men: and when the church is satisfied, they manifest it by ordaining him. In all this, the church confers no power, human or divine; but only the privilege of exercising the power and authority, which they believe he has received from God, in that particular society. This privilege, the church may recall; the candidate may forfeit or voluntarily resign. But neither the refusal of the church, his own forfeiture, or resignation of that particular privilege, can disannull the original call of God, or the obligation of the candidate to obey.

These principles we think are confirmed, both by the New Testament, and church history. Those who can consult Doddridge's paraphrase on the New Testament Mosheim's church history, and Dr. Watts' constitution of a christian church, will see that the practice of the primitive church, in such matters, was exceedingly simple; and according to the principles of common sense, as stated above.

Some have supposed that the legal authority of trans-

acting church business, wholly independent of the Spirit of grace, has been committed to the rulers of the church; so that the transactions of those, thus authorized, and those only, are legal. Now upon this principle none have legal authority to preach, administer ordinance, &c. unless he has received it through regular succession from the Apostles. This regular succession has been so often broken, that it is impossible ever to get into order again, unless we make the church of Rome the standard, and return into uniformity with it: For every division and subdivision from that has shared the same fate of suspension or deposition. This was the case with Luther. "He was commanded," (says Dr. Mosheim,) "to renounce his errors within sixty days, and cast himself upon the clemency of the Pope, on pain of excommunication. At first he purposed to appeal from the sentence of the lordly pontiff to the respectable decision of a general council: but as he foresaw that this appeal would be treated with contempt at the court of Rome; and that when the time, prescribed for his recantation was elapsed, the thunder of excommunication would be levelled at his devoted head, he judged it prudent to withdraw himself, voluntarily from the communion of the church of Rome, before he was obliged to leave it by force; and thus to render this new bull of ejection a blow in the air, an exercise of authority without any object to act upon. At the same time he was resolved to execute this wise resolution in a public manner, that his voluntary retreat from the communion of a corrupt and superstitious church, might be universally known, before the lordly pontiff had prepared his ghostly thunder. With this view, on the 10th of December, in the year 1520, he had a pile of wood erected without the walls of the city of Wittemberg, and there, in the presence of a prodigious multitude of people, of all ranks, and orders, he committed to the flames both the bull that had been published against him, and the decretals and canons relating to the Pope's supreme jurisdiction. By this he declared to the world, that he was no longer a sub-

ject of the Roman pontiff, and that of consequence, the sentence of excommunication, which was daily expected, from Rome, was entirely superfluous and insignificant.* For the man who voluntarily withdraws himself from any society, cannot with any appearance of reason or common sense, be afterwards forcibly and authoritatively excluded from it. However he only separated himself from the church of Rome, which considers the Pope infallible, and not from the church considered in a more extensive sense; notwithstanding, in less than a month after this noble and important step had been taken by the Saxon reformer, a second bull was issued against him, by which he was expelled from the communion of the church, for having insulted the majesty, and having disowned the supremacy, of the Roman pontiff. He was also condemned the next year by the diet of Worms, as a schismatic, a notorious and obstinate heretic; and the severest punishments denounced against those who should receive, entertain, maintain, or countenance him, either by acts of hospitality, by conversation or writing. And his disciples, adherents, and followers, were involved in the same condemnation." (Mosheim's Eccle. History, Vol. 4; page 51, 52, 55.) Against this edict the reformed party protested, by which they got the name of *Protestants*.

But our Synod were of a different opinion from Dr. Mosheim, as they have acted upon the very same principles with the lordly pontiff.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

(CONTINUED.)

In the last number, we endeavored to establish the proposition that the scriptures are the cause and foundation of faith. We now proceed—

2ndly. That the proper object of our faith, as present,

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* The Pope might have published to the churches that Luther was no longer connected with the see of Rome, and thus have warned them against him. This is all that Synod could have done respecting us, with any appearance of reason or common sense.

ed in the scriptures, is, that "Jesus is the Christ, the son of God." "*These* are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God." This truth is the life and soul of revelation—the focus where all the rays of divine light converge, and thence diverge to enlighten the world in darkness, and give life to the dead in sin. This truth is established by the best evidence ever given, and to it is affixed the seal of Heaven.

John the Immerser, an acknowledged prophet, a burning and a shining light, testified, "I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God." The Father spoke with an audible voice from Heaven, "This is my beloved, Son in whom I am well pleased." Jesus frequently testified that he was the son of God, and that God was his Father, and appealed to the miracles he perperformed as proof of his words; "For the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works which I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. "The disciples confessed him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Nathaniel, in whom there was no guile, said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God." Martha professed her faith, and said, "I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God." The centurion, who presided at the crucifixion, and they that were with him, when he saw the wonderful events which transpired then, said "Truly this was the Son of God." The Ethiopian Eunuch professed his faith to Philip's satisfaction; "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Jesus was declared by his resurrection to be the Son of God. Rom. i. 3. Paul, after his conversion, "straitway preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the son of God." John wrote his gospel to confirm this fact—"These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." This doctrine was considered of vital importance, a *sine qua non* of religion; for "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God; God dwelleth in him, and he in God." "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

It may be asked, what is the import of believing that Jesus is the Christ? The terms *Christ* in Greek, and *Messiah* in Hebrew, are of the same import, and signify *the anointed one.* It was an ordinance of God under the law, that every prophet, priest and king of his people should be anointed with oil before they dare officiate in those relations. Till this was done, it was considered rebellion against the government for any man to act in either of these offices in Israel. This oil of consecration, by divine appointment, was perfumed with the sweetest odors in nature, and all Israel were forbidden to make any like unto it under the penalty of death. When this oil was applied to the person to be consecrated to any one of these offices, the perfumes flowing from his body rendered his presence agreeable to all around him. Thus the pleasantness arising from the view of brethren dwelling together in unity, is compared to the oil poured on Aaron's head—p. 133. This oil represented the Holy Spirit, the true "oil of gladness," with which God anointed Jesus. Were the perfumes of the oil under the law sweet and pleasant? How infinitely sweeter to the believer are the perfumes of the oil of gladness, the Holy Spirit flowing from Jesus, the Christ of God? The spirit without measure, the fullness of the Godhead, emanating from him in divine beauty and glory, produces gladness, joy and pleasure, known by none but the inhabitants of heaven, and obedient believers on earth.

When God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit, then was he consecrated prophet, priest and king. As a prophet he taught the truth of heaven, and revealed the benevolent purpose of the Father to the world, all that was necessary for us to know—as a priest he made reconciliation for iniquity; and as a king he established the kingdom of heaven on earth, gave laws for its regulation, and reigns in Zion. To believe that Jesus is the Christ, is to believe that he is anointed of God to execute these offices, or to be the Saviour of the world. He must certainly be qualified for this work, if God anointed him; if not, both the anointer and anointed

must be disgraced; because they failed in the execution. If a believer be not saved, it follows that Christ was unable to effect the work for which he was sent.

It may be again enquired, What is the import of believing that Jesus is the Son of God? We answer: When we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, we believe the inexpressible and astonishing love of God to the world. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life." John 4, 9, 10. John 3, 16. "God hath commended (displayed) his love to us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. 5. It was the love of God that raised up, qualified and gave Moses to be the prophet, king and leader of Israel from Egypt to Canaan. How much greater would his love appear, had he sent and given his angel Gabriel! How inconceivably great does it appear, when "he spared not his *own* Son, but delivered him up for us all"?—his *own* Son, his *only* Son, his *only begotten* Son, in whom he delighted? These epithets declare his dignity, and distinguish him from all in the universe of God. No man, nor angel was ever called God's *own* Son, God's *only begotten* Son. "For to which of the angels said he (the Father) at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?—and I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" Heb. 1, 5. His dignity so far exceeds that of angels, that they, yea all of them, are required to worship him. Heb. 1, 6. Who that believes in Jesus, does not see the love of God to sinners, in the gift of his Son? What believer, seeing this love, does not feel his enmity slain —his rebellion subdued—his heart disposed in love to God and to his Son Jesus—his eyes flowing with floods of sorrow at the remembrance of his sins, and at the sight of his unworthiness? He sinks in humble submis-

sion at his feet—confesses his sin and unworthiness—yields obedience to his commands, and determines to spend the remnants of his days in his service. While he is humbled in the dust with a sense of his own unworthiness, his thankful soul rises to heaven in praise. "We love him because he first loved us."

The belief that Jesus is the Son of God, induces us more confidently to trust in him. Were he a mere man we should fear; were he the tallest angel in heaven we should hesitate to trust in him,—but being the Son of God, having received the Holy Spirit without measure, we unhesitatingly trust his power, wisdom, and grace, assured that he is able to save us, and to keep that we commit to him faithfully to the end. With his laws and government we are pleased, and in his ways are all our delight.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

To the Editor of the Christian Register.

SIR, I inclose you a small document of some interest, which originated in North Carolina. The author of it is a respectable minister of the Methodist persuasion.

A CORRESPONDENT.

Charleston, S. C.

An Address to the Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist Churches.

DEAR BRETHREN.—From the variety of opinions on doctrines and Church Government, that exists among you, as bodies of Christian people, it does appear that a spirit of forbearance and moderation is indispensable. And, as it has been my misfortune, (if I may call it a misfortune,) to differ with each and all of you, in many things, I have only to solicit your forbearance, until a better understanding can be obtained between us.

If you, or any of you, think it right that there should exist in the Church, a diversity of opinions, then, in that case, you are bound to exercise forbearance. It behooves you, who think all Christians ought to see alike, in every thing that belongs to the doctrines of

the Church, to use those means which are best calculated to accomplish that end. And surely there is no better method than to enlighten your brethren who differ from you in sentiment.

It might be thought too bold a step in me, to mark out the course to be taken, to accomplish this desirable object. But this I think I may say, that reason and sound argument, instead of declamation and denunciation, will be the only effectual method to accomplish it.

All mankind being made of the same materials, all possess the same nature, feellings and prejudices, in a greater or less degree, according to their opportunites and advantages in life. Darkness is the privation of light, and ignorance is the want of understanding, or the means of understanding. Now, to possess the means of understanding, and withhold them from our fellowmen, and then to censure and condemn them, would be unjust and cruel. As I cannot take shelter here, so as to accuse you justly, having the same means common to all, I only solicit a fair and impartial investigation of our differences. Let our doctrines be properly understood, the reasons and evidences fairly and justly stated, and then let them be compared. Candour and honesty would compel him who has least grounds to support his doctrine, to submit.

Whatever may be your differences of opinions in other points of "*theology*," you are agreed in the doctrines of the "*trinity*," "*total depravity*," and *atonement*;" and here I beg leave to differ from you,

If the *Trinity* be a doctrine of the Bible, why is it not to be found in so many words, neither in the Old or New Testaments? Why did the fathers of the Church confess that the doctrine could not be found there? If the doctrine of *total depravity* be found in the Scriptures, in what book, chapter and verse is it so written?

If the doctrine of an *infinite satisfaction to divine justice*, be true, why is it not once mentioned in the Scriptures?

Whenever these things can be made to appear to my

satisfaction, I shall no longer hesitate to believe with you. And until they are made to appear by some of you, it is to be hoped that a difference from you, will not amount to "*damnable heresy*," seeing you so widely differ from each other in many important points of doctrine.

Orange County, N. C. May 20, 1824.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

NO. 2.

Our preacher, as we have already seen, objects to the doctrine of eternal punishment, because it appears to him unreasonable. Can he then consistently maintain that God is the Governor of the natural and moral worlds?

Why are not all countries, especially those in the same degrees of latitude, equally healthy, the soil in those countries equally good, and the local advantages equal in all respects? Why is there so much timber in many places where there seems to be but little, or no use for it; and none in others where it seems to be much needed? Why does the Almighty suffer the hurricane, that sweeps furiously over the land, and destroys in an hour the labours of man, and the works of his own hands which he has been preserving for ages? Why are we sometimes flooded with water, and at other times famishing for want of it? Why do industrious husbandmen sometimes see the labor of their hands, their families' hope of sustenance, blasted by the withering drought, and the fell monsters pestilence and famine, furiously invading their once peaceful dwelling? Why does the earth open her mouth, and, in a moment, swallow up the good and the bad; the gray headed sinners and the infant that has never done good nor evil?

Why are some members of a family possessed of good constitutions, and sound understandings, while others are lunatics or idiots? Why does he permit the wicked, who fear not God, nor regard man, often to roll in the lap of ease, having all of this worlds goods

that heart could wish, while the humble pious poor are as often destined to linger out a miserable existence, in the vale of misfortune and want, unaided and unpitied by the world?

How will our preacher solve these difficulties upon the principles of reason? Will it be answered to the questions proposed, from a view of the course of things in nature, that there, every thing is conducted according to certain fixed laws? Granted; But who established those laws? Certainly the God of nature. The questions proposed then, remain untouched; nor can they be solved by us upon the principles of reason.

That things frequently do exist, and take place as we have stated we know, but why they do so exist, and so take place, we know not. If then, we meet with many things, in the economy of the natural and moral worlds, the reasons of which are inscrutable by us, is it strange, that in the economy of redemption, some things should be above the grasp of our reasons? And as we are not disposed to reflect on the goodness, or wisdom of God, because of the seeming imperfections, which we behold in nature; shall we reject the doctrine of eternal punishment, because it appears to us unreasonable? I trust not. The humble christian therefore, rests satisfied, that "the Judge of all the earth will do right," although "his judgements are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out." But after all, where is the great absurdity of the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent? Will it be answered, that because men are but a moment (comparatively speaking,) offending, that therefore, their punishment should be of short duration? We cannot admit this reasoning as good; for it is contrary to the settled principles of all good government. For many crimes, which are trivial in their nature, and consequences, but to commit which it required a considerable time, only a momentary punishment is inflicted.

Whereas, for many others, of great magnitude, which are committed in a moment, the offenders are punished with a punishment, almost, or even quite com-

mensurate with their lives. Thus in human governments the object of the law is to apportion punishment to crime. But are we able to conceive the extent of criminality, which attaches to that man, who spends his days in sin, tramples under his feet the mercy of God, wades through the blood of Jesus, and uses all his influence against his kingdom and glory? Can we say of such a man, that, having rejected eternal life, he should not experience eternal death?

We do not, however, rely upon reason to support the doctrine in question; nor to support any point in theology.

We believe the idea of eternal punishment is taught in the new Testament. To that book, therefore, we shall resort to establish it; believing that no argument can be as conclusive, to the Christian, as that this, or that, is true, because God has said it.

Now, candid reader, turn over your New Testament, to the 25th of Matt., and read particularly, from the 31st verse to the end of the chapter; and we have no doubt, you will find the points clearly established:—1st. That God has appointed a particular period, yet to come, in which he will judge the world; (for this, by the way, our preacher also denied.) And 2dly, That at *that* period, he will punish the wicked, with banishment from his presence, into eternal punishment. For, there it is positively stated, that, "when the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left. Then shall the king say to them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat, &c. But to them on his left hand he will say, "depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire; (or as Campbell translates it, *eternal fire,*) for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat," &c. And he con-

cludes the chapter in these remarkable words, "And these (the wicked) shall go into everlasting punishment, (or eternal punishment, as Campbell translates it) but the righteous into life eternal." Now reader, let me *ask:* If I had the privilege of choosing language, to establish the two positions I have taken, could I have selected any more appropriate than that cited, and referred to? I am satisfied you will answer no. For it is clear that all nations have never yet been gathered before the son of man, and divided, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats. Then the first position, "that God has appointed a particular period yet to come, in which he will Judge the world," is proved.

And it is equally as clear, that at *that* day of Judgement to come, "the wicked will go into eternal punishment." Our second position then is as clearly proved as the first. Now, let me ask the advocates of the system I am opposing, if the declaration of the Saviour that "the wicked shall go into eternal punishment, does not prove, that they will be eternally miserable? Can his declaration, that "the righteous shall go into life eternal," prove, that they will not be eternally happy? We think not. We believe the learned all agree, that the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, as used in the portion of Scripture under consideration, in reference to the life of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, are translated from the same word in the original Greek. We believe, therefore, that every argument advanced against the eternal misery of the wicked, is equally levelled against the eternal happiness of the righteous; and that if the language the Saviour has employed, in relation to the punishment of the wicked, does not prove that it will be endless, no language can.

But, said the preacher, we read of an "everlasting covenant made with the children of Israel—of the land of Canaan being given to them, as an "everlasting inheritance," of "everlasting hills," &c. But some of these things have had, and all of them will have an end: why then may not the "everlasting punishment" of the wicked also come to an end? And why not add, going

upon the same ground, that the "everlasting happiness" of the righteous will come to an end; for it is clear to me, that there is as much reason for the one as the other. But it should be considered, that the everlasting covenant, the everlasting inheritance of Canaan, the everlasting hills, are things of time, for we are taught in the Scriptures, that the everlasting covenant has waxed old and vanished away; that the everlasting hills shall be burned up; and matter of fact teaches, that the Jews have long since lost Canaan, as an inheritance. But the punishment of the wicked as spoken of in the portion of God's word, which we have been considering, will take place in eternity, after the general judgement: Nor can it be proved from the Bible, that it will ever terminate. Let it be shewn as clearly that the punishment of the wicked will come to an end, as we have shewn, that, the everlasting covenant has come to an end, and we will concede the point. Until this is done, although we may still be represented as maintaining a cruel, and unreasonable system; one which casts a dark veil over the divine character; we shall continue to regard such charges as entirely gratuitous, and believe with Paul, that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

I am not unaware, however, that passages of Scripture are reluctantly pressed, by universalists, into their service to prove their favorite point, that the punishment of the wicked will come to an end. But their efforts, when scrutinized, clearly show that their cause labors. For you will find them frequently resorting to dark prophecies of the Old Testament, of doubtful meaning, to help them out. In this course it must be confessed that the subtlety of the serpent is manifest. For their system bears looking at much better in the pale glimmering lights of Moses and the Prophets, than in the clear and effulgent beams of the Sun of righteousness." Not that I suppose, the law or the Prophets, give any more countenance to the system, than the Gospel; but in those dim lights its advocates have a better chance of hiding its deformities. But if dark

prophecies, and detached scraps of Scripture, torn from their connexion, are to be considered as sufficient to support a doctrine. Then, "what whimsies may not be invented, what errors may not be broached, and what blasphemies may not be uttered under the sanction of the Scripture?" Let the almost countless sects, in Christendom, with their jarring creeds, all claiming the Bible as their basis, respond to these questions. Alas! they declare in language too loud not to be heard, and too plain not to be understood, that the most absurd and blasphemous systems ever broached, that the most puerile whimsies ever invented, receive countenance from them.

And what else can we expect, while predjudice, pride, bigotry and self-will, so predominate in the minds of professed christians; and while they read the Bible, not so much to know the mind of God, as to support their pre-conceived opinions, and thus to minister to their vanity, their pride and prejudice? But when Christians shall learn to cease from man, to cease from themselves, to bring their reason into subordination to revelation, and learn of him who is meek and lowly in heart, then we may expect to see and experience a happier state of things in religion. That blessed period, we rejoice to believe is just at hand—may Heaven hasten it!

TIMOTHY.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Remarks on the Circular letter, written by Elder SILAS M. NOEL, *to the Churches, composing the Franklin Association.*

The object of this Circular is, no doubt, to support two creeds, (the Bible and a human creed,) though the writer does not distinctly avow it. All will agree, that the Bible is a good creed book, and of course every society ought to refer to it, as a standard, by which to determine the qualifications of its members. Under this view, this creed, in the present state of society, is both lawful and expedient. But that other creed, so plainly hinted at, in the Circular, by a little attention to the

writer's reasoning respecting it, as may be easily seen, carries its own refutation with it, as we shall in a few instances make appear. The writer, speaking of excluding corruptions from the church, says, "It is vain to say the Bible is sufficient for that purpose;" of course it is not vain to say the creed book is sufficient; which makes the human creed of higher authority than the Bible. This is plain. Speaking of the enemies of human creeds, the Circular declares, "They will cease to despise a remedy merely because it has not healed every malady, cured every disorder. For the same reason they might pour contempt upon the *Holy Bible*." In this he makes the Bible superior to the creeds; admitmitting it to be more powerful in healing maladies, and curing disorders, than his creed.

Again, it says, "no Protestant ever professed to regard his creed, considered as a human composition, as of equal authority with the Scriptures, and far less as of paramount authority." It then follows, that a church, that acts under the authority of a human creed, acts with less authority than she would, were she to take the Bible without her creed. Further, the writer acknowledges, that "the Bible is the word of God, the *only perfect rule of faith and manners*." Why then submit to an imperfect rule, when a perfect one is in your possession. If the Bible, be the only perfect *rule*, it necessarily excludes every other rule. In this the whole question is yielded. Also, the writer declares the Bible to be "the only ultimate test in all controversies." The ultimate test is the last, or final test. Let us pause—does not the Circular attempt to show, that the Bible will not do for a test or standard, by which to keep the church pure? that it has ever failed while the little creed book, is the most excellent for this purpose? And does not every one know, who has any knowledge of a creed book, that when a supposed heretic is arraigned for trial, he is tried by the creed of the church, and not by the Bible? that beyond the creed, he may in vain look for any test, that the creed is the ultimate test, &c.

Take all the above together, and it looks as hetero-

geneous as the groupe of which the writer complains in his Circular. It cannot be expected to purify, with impurity. The writer of the Circular being judge, they cannot be wrong, who take the Bible as of Supreme authority as the ultimate test, being himself, compelled to admit it.

The question asked in the Circular is this, "Is it lawful and expedient, to adhere to a creed, in the admission of members into the fellowship of the church; and particularly in the admission of candidates into office?" If the Bible were intended, we would answer in the affirmative; but as a separate Confession of Faith, made by poor fallible man or men is designed, we are constrained to say it is not lawful. When it is asked, is it lawful to do this, or that? if the answer be given in the affirmative, it is natural to enquire by what *law* is such answer given. Does the Bible say the Church should make out an epitome of her faith, and call it a creed, and adhere to it in the admission of members into her fellowship? I answer no: Any thing which is *lawful* must be authorized by some law; and as there is no law of heaven, which authorizes a human creed, by which to govern the church, it follows, that all who attempt it, act without any authority from Heaven.

If we go to the Scriptures, where has our Saviour, or his Apostles, given authority to any man or set of men, to prescribe articles of faith, and judge men for their opinions? Why should our Lord have commanded us to hear and understand, if others are to hear and understand for us.

If Christ intended the task of examining, thinking, deciding, and judging, should be confined to a few favored persons, who should affix to themselves the name of the church, why has he given no intimations of such intention? This would have given much peace and comfort to many, who have thought it their duty to search with prayerful earnestness for the true meaning of the Scriptures, and to adopt from knowledge and conviction the principles of their faith.

All doubts might thus be easily removed; for as soon

as it were believed, that the church has the authority to fix the true meaning of Scripture, nothing would remain, "but to believe as the church believes." Instead of searching the Scripture, it would only be necessary to search the creed of the church. The Bible might be laid aside; for why should it be read if all its important truths can be found in a much smaller compass?

If we must have a creed, distinct from the plain letter of Scripture, it is worth while to enquire from what source it is to be obtained? Shall we go to some person or persons in whom we have unlimited confidence? Shall we go back to ecclesiastical assemblies, synods, and councils? But these have all differed. What articles of faith, among the many contradictory ones, which have been sent out under the authority of great names, for the purpose of putting down heresy, shall we adopt? Until this can be settled we had better take the Bible.

It must be plain, that if, as is contended in the Circular, creeds do not supersede the Bible, the Bible does supersede creeds: 2 Tim. 3, 16, 17; "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Observe; 1st "The Scripture is profitable for doctrines:" If there be any doctrine in human creeds, not found in the Bible, all will agree, it ought not to be there. If the Bible contain the same doctrine as a creed, then the creed is unnecessary. 2dly, "For reproof." If any should need reproof, the Bible furnishes the means, a creed book can do no more. 3dly, "For correction." Should any err in faith or manners, the Bible has truth sufficient for correction. Can a little confession, called a creed, do more? 4thly, "For instruction in righteousness." Whether this be regarded as refering to the heart, or exterior behaviour, the Bible is amply sufficient. Lastly, That by means of the Scriptures, "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The word perfect has in itself a superlative meaning.

and consequently excludes every idea of amendment? It follows, the Bible supersedes all human creeds. The man of God, by it, is thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Of course, any thing added is precisely that much more than the Almighty intended the man of God should have. The solemn question may be asked of all creed makers, "who hath required this at your hands? Was my book defective?" for it is evident that every creed is predicated upon some deficiency in the Bible. The writer of the Circular says, that by a creed he "means a summary exhibition of what the scriptures teach." If the Lord had thought a summary of the whole Bible would be better than the whole, no doubt he would have given it. But he did not, therefore the whole, in its present form, is best. I am sure the scriptures never taught that there are three persons in the Godhead, yet the writer in the Circular asserts there are three. He would have this in his epitome, or creed.

The Apostle writes to the Corinthians thus, "we have not dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy; for by faith ye stand:" 2 Cor. i, 24. That the Franklin Association by her Creed, wishes to have dominion over the faith and consciences of her members, is evident from her complaints against those, who oppose human creeds. Hear her in the Circular: "And according to their plan, each one is allowed to interpret for himself; to place his own constructions upon the scriptures. It denies to the Church the right to interfere in these matters of conscience." Merciful Lord! has it come this; that it is a grief to some, in this land of liberty, that each one of God's childred should interpret the Bible for himself! Then Elder Noel or some others, must interpret for the members of the Church. Nor is he allowed the privilege of putting his own construction upon the scriptures. He must of course put the construction given by the Church in the creed under which he may live, and probably sentenced to the devil if he should depart from it. Thus. the poor creature is in prison.

(CONCLUDED IN OUR NEXT.)

WILLIAMSPORT, O. March 13. 1827.

DEAR BROTHER—With pleasure we comply with the request of our brethren when met in conference the 12th inst. in giving you a brief detail of our affairs, and our arrangements for communions the ensuing season in Deer Creek District. We are happy to inform you that in many Churches religion is increasing and truth prevailing. On Hay run since last fall 20 have been added to the fold of the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls To the Church at Union has been added a good number of believers. At the heads of Deer Creek and Beaver, a Church has lately been constituted, and many have since been brought in fellowship with it. Another Church has recently been constituted at the Round Prairie. Up the Scioto the Lord is carrying on a good work. We are glad to say, that the cause of God is gaining ground throughout this district, in spite of all the impediments our opposers are throwing in the way.

We send you a copy of our arrangements for communions, and wish you to insert it in the Christian Messenger, that as many of the brethren as feel disposed to come and help us, may know where and when to meet us.

We, the Elders and Brethren present, do agree to hold, annually, in Deer Creek District, a Union Meeting, at which all the Elders and as many Brethren as can come, are requested to meet in order to renew our union, harmony and peace— to become more perfectly acquainted with each other, and to settle all difficulties among ourselves, should any exist. This meeting is to commence on the Friday before the third Lord's day in August, at the Boiling Spring, Concord Church On Tuesday following will commence our conference at the same place We design camping on the ground, and request the brethren to come prepared for it, with tents and provisions. Without this preparation, the neighborhood would be oppressed, and not able to supply the miltitude expected.

The 4th Lord's day in June, a communion will be at Richard Wilson's. The 2d do. at Hay Run The first do. in August, at Br. Miller's on Scioto. The 3rd do. in September, at Union Church. The 4th do at Brother Graham's Deer Creek. The 1st. do. in October, at Brother Horny's, Sugar Creek. The 3d do at heads of Deer Creek and Beaver. The 1st. do. in September, at Pisgah, near Round Prairie.

FERGUS GRAHAM,
ENOCH HARVEY.

We have just received the Minutes of the Christian Conference on the Wabash, from which we copy the following: "Unanimously agreed, that in the opinion of this Conference, it would be to the glory of God, and tend greatly to the Redeemer's kingdom, to have a General Christian Conference established in some convenient place in the Western States, in which all the Christian Conferences in those states should be represented."

The attention of the different Conferences is now invited to this subject, and the result of their deliberations is requested to be forwarded to the Christian Messenger, through which medium the minds of all can be known to each other. It is wished that the ob-

jects of the proposed general Conference had been disclosed by the brethren who desire it. This might have influenced our Conference to coalesce in the proposal. EDITOR.

The names of the Elders and unordained Preachers in the Conference, north of Kentucky:

Elders—B. W. Stone, J Hughes F R Palmer, Tho. Smith John Morrow, Wm Morrow, John Rogers, L J. Fleming, M P Wills, John Roberts, T M. Allen, J Shawhan, J. Longley, J. Powell, H. Osborne, M Rice, L. Hamblick, Rowland Burns, J. Durham, A. M'Lean, P Mauzy, Aaron Sanders, Cummins Brown.—23

Unordained—S. G. Marshall. S. Ellis, W. Parker, P. Cox, J. Caldwell—5.

OBITUARY.

DIED, March 7, at his own residence, in Scott County, Kentucky, ROBERT WARFIELD NUCKOLS, son of Mr LEWIS NUCKOLS, and son-in-law to the Editor, aged 24 years He suffered long and severely; but his sufferings were sanctified to the good of his soul. A few weeks before he died, he sought and obtained the favor of God, and continued a happy expectant of immortality till he quit these mortal shores. A few days before he expired, feeling the near approach of death, he said, "I am not afraid to die—I am going home—I am going to Jesus" With joy he repeated these words: "Hereby we know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." He raised his hands, and said "O! I love every one that loves Jesus" Often with pleasure he repeated these texts: "Our light afflictions which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" and "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" The morning previous to his death, he suddenly laid his hand on his breast; being asked by his mother the reason of his doing so, he said he felt an unusual sensation. Then lifting his eyes to heaven, he calmly said "Thou Lamb of God, resign to me thy will; if this is death let it come, and come as easily as possible. Mother, said he, I am not deranged; it is death—the Lord Jesus is with me in the valley and shadow of death" Being asked whether he feared death, he answered, "Oh! no." Soon after, without a struggle or groan he fell asleep in Jesus. A great multitude of weeping mourners attended his funeral. He left a wife and many respectable relatives, in whose breasts his memory is embalmed.

☞ *The Editor conceives an apology due his patrons for the bad quality of the paper, on which his present and last number were printed. Better paper will be procured for the next and future numbers.*

G. L. FINNELL, PR.—GEORGETOWN, KY.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

VOL. I.] GEORGETOWN, KY JUNE, 25, 1827. [No 8.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—NO. V.

On the above extracts from Dr. Mosheim, we also observe that Luther was guilty of the crime of *declinature.* He declined the jurisdiction of the church of Rome, when charged with an atrocious crime, to avoid the censure of excommunication. He was afterwards excommunicated by the high court of that church. His sentence was not for the false doctrines, of which he was before charged; but for insulting the Majesty, and disowning the supremacy of the Roman pontiff; and also for schism. And yet he did not withdraw from the church in a large sense, but from that part of it only, which considered the Pope infallible. In like manner we have not separated from the Presbyterian church at large; but from that part only, which considers the Confession of Faith infallible, that is, as the standard of the church. How easy it is to see the similarity between Luther's case, and that of ours; and yet he never suspected that he had lost his authority to preach; nor has any Protestant since his day called it in question.

Synod takes it for granted, that we received all our authority from them, to exercise the ministerial functions, and as they have taken it away, we therefore have none. Let us apply this to the case of Luther; if he received his authority from the church of Rome, and this authority was taken from him, through what medium then has it been transmitted to the Synod of Kentucky? We would be glad to see authentic testimonials of their spiritual genealogy, proving their orderly descent from the Apostles of Christ. Or if this cannot be done we must consider them as illegitimate as ourselves. It is commonly used as an apology for the Saxon reformer, that the church from which he separated was so corrupt that her suspension was wholly invalid. Let this be granted, and what will it argue? Certainly, that

her power of ordination was also invalid. This proves at once, that the ordination, not only of Luther, but also of Calvin, and every other protestant minister, is *null and void;* seeing that all received their ordination from that corrupt church. Therefore if the filthiness of the church of Rome is taken to plaister the character of our reformers, it will render the apostolic authority of our Synodical brethren not only suspicious, but absolutely a blank.

As the proceedings of Synod were evidently arbitrary and unauthorized, we need not wonder that we are charged to the world, under the odious name of *schismatics*, without any fair statement of the crime, or evidence to support it. A *schismatic* is one, who aims at dividing the church into sects and parties; not only by separating from its communion and drawing away disciples after him, but also, *by loving the pre-eminence in the church, receiving not the brethren, forbidding them that would, and casting them out of the church*, as did Diotrephes, 3 Epis. of John.

We have before proved that, merely forming a separate association, is not schism: provided that association be not intended to dissolve the union and communion of the church. But the Synod takes it for granted that a separation from their *reverend body*, is a separation from the church; thus implicitly declaring, that they are the only church on earth. We would hardly have thought that a body of men so liberal in their principles, as to admit Christians of other denominations to their communion, would exclude those of their own, for merely renouncing what others never acknowledged. Is it not confessed by all that a schismatic spirit, and a party spirit, are the same? If so, let the reader judge on which side the party spirit operated through the whole of the business. Was it a party spirit that induced the preachers at first, to lay aside those points of controversy, which had been a means of keeping the children of God apart? What spirit prevailed at Fleming, when the late revival first commenced; when Dr. Campbell and Mr. Northcut, a methodist preacher, gathered their flocks together, and fed them at the same table? It was justly confessed that Heaven smiled upon the union. Was it not under the same spirit of union, that the flame spread to the east and to the west? Let bigotry blush, and be ashamed at the recollection! But when former things were thus forgotten, and former differences laid aside, whether was it

a spirit of union or a party spirit, that prompted some, who were spectators only of this glorious work, to bring forward those speculative opinions, which, at that time, were neither publicly disputed, nor condemned; and involved the church in a controversy? This may be emphatically said to *be dangerous to the souls of men, and hostile to the interests of all vital religion.* We neither felt nor expressed a wish to leave our own society, nor proselyte others to follow us: but on this ground we could not long remain in peace: The bible doctrine was too simple for those, who had been accustomed to solve riddles and reconcile contradictions.

The Synod have again raised their standard, which, for three happy years had been gathering dust. The lines will probably now be cleared; the enemies of orthodoxy, however pious, be driven out of the pure church; drowsy bigots recalled to arms, and another bold push made to Calvinize the word. May Heaven prevent the furious onset, and revive in the breasts of christians a spirit of forbearance and love! And may we, while we go under the *name* of *schismatics* be ever kept from the *thing*.

It is not uncommon to give the blow and raise the cry. We are brought up to public view, pronounced as the leaders of a party thundered against by the bull of suspension, and our congregations declared vacant! Could the Synod imagine that we would be silent? no: The measures carry too strong marks of ecclesiastical tyranny, to influence us farther than we are driven.

If any enquire why we did not appeal to the General Assembly, we answer: it appeared to us unnecessary; because the business must naturally come before them through the minutes of Synod. David did not immediately go to his father-in-law, to learn his disposition towards him; he chose rather to remain in the field, till the flying arrows determined his doom. If we learn from the minutes of the assembly, that they are for peace, we are near at hand, and ready to obey the signal: but if otherwise, our empty seats must so remain.

We have stated notorious facts, and now let every impartial friend to order, judge for himself. If the prosecution was unprecedented and disorderly from first to last, let the candid reader say, whether it was not an orderly step for us to withdraw. We have said in our protest that we only withdrew from the judicatories with which we stood con-

nected, and not from the church; we say so still. They have beaten us uncondemned, being presbyterians, and then would cast us out of the church. Nay, their letter of suspension will not do. We must again call for order: and desire that body to produce authority, not from the annals of the church of Scotland, but from the word of God, or at least from the constitution of the presbyterian church in America, to justify their proceedings. If they have suspended us without authority, the General Assembly will have to say whether they were in order or not. So long as we believe their proceedings were out of order, that belief will bind us more firmly to the church. The hireling may flee when his congregations are declared vacant, and his salary called in: and set out in search of another benifice. But we pledge ourselves, through the grace of God, to stand fast in the unity of the Spirit, and without respect of persons, endeavor to gather into one the children of God, who have been *scattered in the cloudy and dark day.* How this solemn pledge was redeemed, will be seen in the progress of this history. It will be also seen how little dependence can be put in the pledges of men! Who could have believed that such a noble purpose should so soon be blasted?

After the adjournment of Synod we returned to our several homes with a sorrowful heart, and with many tears. We were soon followed by the authorized heralds of Synod, proclaiming our suspension, and declaring our congregations *vacant.* The mournful scenes of those days can never be forgotten by me, nor by thousands who were witnesses of their evils. Who without a sigh could see torn asunder the pastor and his flock, united in the closest ties of friendship and christian affection, strengthened too by the growth of years? Who without a tear could see the flood gates of strife raised, and the sweet spirit of religion swept from the sanctuary of God, where peace, love and union had long delighted to dwell? Who, that had been accustomed to see the great congregation collecting from every quarter on every Lord's day at the house of God to worship together with solemnity and joy,—who, accustomed to this, but must feel a holy indignation at the men, who should raise their voice and forbid the people to worship together under the penalty of excommunication? This was done. Future ages will be incredulous; for many in the present day can scarcely believe it. But why all this mischief?

What evil had we done? This was our crime, we preferred the Bible to the Confession and preached the *doctrine* of the former rather than the *doctrines* of the latter. We could not believe both, for we saw they widely differed; we could not preach both without preaching contradictions; we could not serve both, for who can serve two masters? We were under the necessity of cleaving to, or of rejecting one or the other. We could not conscientiously bear a party standard, or fight under it against our brethren.

The great majority of our congregations cleaved to us and to the word we preached Their confidence could not be shaken. The Presbyterian preachers generally thinking their cause in danger, expended much zeal and labor to crush our influence, and divert the attention of the people from us. But all their efforts were apparently vain. Their endeavors to defend and establish the peculiarities of their system, rather tended to open the eyes of the people to its deformity, and opposition to what they deemed the gospel of God, and to strengthen their attachment to the doctrine we preached. The Methodists, thinking that we would all unite with them, were very friendly, and treated us with brotherly attention.

In the mean time we were busily engaged in preaching and defending our views of the gospel. To the Bible we paid assiduous attention, *determined to know nothing but Jesus and him crucified.* The people followed our example in studying the Bible; and knowledge and true piety began to shine forth in the professors of religion. We prepared and published our apology, including our views of the gospel, and our remarks on the Confession of Faith. This publication had a happy effect on the public mind; not only to soften their prejudices against us, but also to convince many of the truth, of which they became zealous advocates. It is now thought necessary to give a concise view of that doctrine we published and preached continually at that time, that the world may more correctly judge and determine respecting us, and of the justice or injustice of our opposers.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

[CONTINUED.]

John xx, 31. These are written, &c.

In the two last numbers, we have endeavored to prove that the scriptures are the cause and foundation of believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; we also considered the import of the expressions, *Christ* and *the Son of God*. We now proceed—

3dly. To state the evidence recorded in the Scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

The evidence to which John particularly appeals, is, the works done by Jesus in his life; as the healing of all manner of diseases with a word or with a touch—restoring sight to the blind—hearing to the deaf—speech to the dumb—life to the dead—speaking the raging sea to instant calmness, &c. &c. These works John with the other witnesses testified as done in their presence, and most of them before multitudes of people. These works were performed by Jesus, or they were not. If performed by him, it will be confessed that he is the Messiah, the Son of God. If they were not performed by him then it is also confessed that his disciples were false witnesses, endeavoring to palm an imposture on the world. Let us calmny examine on which side the greater evidence lies.

1st. That a people, called Christians, have lived in the world, ever since the days of Christ, admits of no doubt. That these people have always believed that these works were done by Christ, as witnessed by his apostles, is evident from their quotations of the apostolic writings.

2. The bitterest enemies of Christ to the days of Celsus never denied that these works were done by him. They acknowledged them, but attributed them to the power of magic, as did Celsus himself. This age of reason contemptuously spurns such magical power.

3. These works are said to be done in the presence of multitudes. If they had not been done, how easily could the apostles have been detected as false witnesses by the opposers of christianity, who were disposed to take every advantage to destroy a religion, which they saw must destroy their own. We will select one of many of these works; the case of raising Lazarus from the grave. The family is described as consisting of Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary. Their place of residence is de-

clared to be in Bethany near Jerusalem. Lazarus died and was buried. A great many Jews are said to be with the two sisters, endeavoring to comfort them. After he had been dead four days, Jesus in the presence of the multitude, said, "Lazarus come forth," and instantly he rose from the grave, and afterwards lived among the Jews. Had this been a false statement, would not the opposers have said, We have gone to Bethany—we have enquired for such a family—we have searched the records of the nation to find it—we have diligently enquired respecting his dying, and of his being raised from the dead by Jesus Christ; but no such family, and no such events have ever been known or heard of there. This contradiction to the Apostle's testimony would have been widely circulated and preserved to all future generations. But of such contradiction to any one work of the Savior the world has never heard, from those who lived in the same country and age, for no others can be competent witnesses.

4. The disciples had no earthly motive to induce them to palm this imposition upon the world, if it were one; but every thing would have dissuaded them from it. Profit, honor, and pleasure are the grand incentives to our actions on earth. These they well knew they could not acquire by testifying these things, but the opposite they knew they must continually meet, as shame, disgrace, poverty, persecution & death. They certainly believed what they wrote.

5. It is certainly reasonable that God should by this means establish a religion for the eternal advantage of his creatures.

On the other side, should a person assert that he believed these works were not done by Jesus, I ask him on what evidence do you base your faith? Have you testimony that they were never done by any competent witnesses who lived where and when they are said to have been done? No: not any from friend or foe. Do you think it incredible that divine power could perform such works? No. Do you think it unreasonable and contrary to infinite benevolence that such works should be performed to bring mankind to believe for their eternal happiness? No. Yet you believe these works were not done; in other words, you believe that they are untrue and false, without one shade of evidence. Will not a man of feeling blush to say he believes any fact without a shadow of evidence? Is it not an outrage on reason and

common sense? We must believe the facts or become sceptics; there is no alternative.

2. Jesus prophesied that he should die and rise again the third day from the dead. This prophecy was generally known, and nothing more improbable was ever predicted.—Had he been an impostor, he took the most effectual plan to defea his own influence and designs; for it must then after three days have been known of all that he was a false prophet. Attend to the witnesses of his death and resurrection.—They say that he was crucified at the passover, which was always at the full moon. While he gung on the cross the sun was preternaturally eclipsed for three hours, from 12 to 3 o'clock in the evening—an unusual earthquake split the rocks round about Jerusalem—the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom—and the graves of many of the saints burst open. These were the works of almighty power and they establish the truth that Jesus is the son of God.—Has this testimony of the witnesses ever been denied? The world is defied to produce one instance of any person, who lived at that time and place, (for the testimony of none else can be admitted) that ever contradicted it.—Had these things not taken place at his death, would not all Judea and especially Jerusalem have proclaimed the apostles false witnesses and deceivers? Would not their contradiction have been carefully preserved by the enemies of christianity? What hope could the apostles have had of gaining the belief of any, when they testified to facts which all must have known were false, had they been fabricated? We need not urge the argument. Will any rise up and say I do not believe these events took place at his death—I believe the account of them is false. Pray, sir on what evidence do you found your faith? Not the shadow of evidence to the contrary can be produced. Twelve credible witnesses in a court of justice depose that at a certain time and place they saw A kill his neighber B. Not one evidence appears to the contrary. Every Juror except one believes the fact. This one declares that he believes A did not kill B. He believes without evidence and contrary to the best evidence. Is not this an outrage upon reason and common sense? And can a man unblushingly say that he believes the wonders related as having taken place at our Saviour's death to be fabrications!

Let us see the works that are witnessed as having taken place at the resurrection of Jesus. The doctors alarmed at

what transpired at his death felt very uneasy lest his prediction of rising again from the dead on the third day, should be verified. They go to Pilate and tell him their fears.—They procure a Roman guard to watch the sepulchre day and night to prevent his body from being stolen away. They get Pilate to seal the door of the sepulchre with his own seal. The third the eventful morning rolls round. Heaven, Earth and Hell in awful and silent attention. If he rise Heaven triumphs, Hell is vanquished, salvation is the worlds portion, and Jesus is declared to be son of God according to the spirit of holiness. If he rise not, Hell conquers, Heaven is vanquished—the world's last hope is cut off—and Jesus is an impostor—his deciples false witnesses, and all the Bible a book of lies. The third morning just began to dawn—all nature was hushed in silence. The pale beams of the setting moon were glittering against the furbished spears of the guard still standing round the sepulchre. An angel was despatched to the sepulchre—he alighted—the earth quaked—the dead Saviour rose—the guard fell as dead men—but recovered and fled to the city—they announce the dreadful news to the trembling crowds in the streets roused by the earthquake. The Doctors persuaded the guard to say "while we slept his deciples stole him away." Such evidence would be spurned from any court of justice. Yet it is the best, and only evidence against the fact. Will any say, I believe the statement of his resurrection false? We again enquire for the evidence of his faith? We boldly affirm he has none. And how can he believe, rationally believe?—We confess that a man must shut his eyes and stop his ears, lest he see and hear the evidences of truth, and believe, and be converted and saved.

We might attend to the evidence of the prophets and the works of the apostles to confirm this soul cheering truth that Jesus is the Christ the son of God; but it is not our design to enter fully into this subject. Our design was merely to shew that the works performed by Jesus were sufficient to prove that he was the Christ the son of God, and that they were written and declared by John, sufficient for this purpose.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Remarks on the Circular letter, written by Elder SILAS M. NOEL, *to the Churches, composing the Franklin Association.*

[CONTINUED.]

The great principle, in the reformation from Popery, urged by Luther and others, was, that each one should interpret the Bible for himself,—that the rights of conscience should be preserved inviolate. Have the Franklin association retrograded beyond the reformation? Do they not wish to usurp the rights of conscience? If any thing degrades the dignity of a human being, it surely is, for him to surrender his understanding and conscience into the hands of others.—The spirit of tyranny is the same in Kentucky as in Rome.

But it is contended that in voluntary associations there can be no tyranny though a creed should be formed. Voluntary acts are the only kind, if they be wrong, that deserve censure. I attribute no blame whatever to an involuntary act. Is it right for a number of men, to go a head of the blessed Lord, and make a creed for him, without any athority for so doing? Can a creed be found upon earth, which contains precisely the language of scripture? There is not! consequently there must be an attempt, whenever a creed is made, to amend the work of the Lord.

Voluntary associations are no proof of freedom. Because principles, at first agreed on, are by experience frequently found to be oppressive; hence alterations both in Church and state; and to say a person shall be bound, when he feels oppression, is the very essence of tyranny.

So far as I have noticed the conduct of the Baptists, in receiving members into their churches, they say little or nothing about the peculiar doctrines of their creed at that time. The creed is to be known afterwards, when it may be necessary to feel its authority. Does the writer of the circular, examine a candidate, whether he or she believes that there are three persons in God; or whether the doctrines of his creed are believed. Let those who are in the habit of attending to him judge. The course pursued in receiving members is about as strange, as it would be, for a man to marry a woman, and afterwards to agree to have her.—The creed therefore is a deception.

In the circular we find the following, "before the adversaries of creeds can boast of having gained any thing in this controversy, it devolves upon them to do, what we apprehend

cannot be done; they must exhibit some method scriptural and practicable, of excluding corruption from the church, without a creed.,"

Taking the Bible as the *creed* we have already shewn that the man of God is by it made perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. This whole statement is predicated upon a deficiency in the Bible. Suppose I were to say the Bible has nothing in it by which to keep corruption from the church; the writer of the circular would say you are wrong; it has an entire sufficiency if attended to. So I think. Ah! but we should guard against false interpretations of the scriptures; say the friends of creeds. Let me ask, who since the days of the apostles, has any certainty, that he always interprets right? I should like to see that man, could he be found. The defenders of creeds say our creed is according to the scriptures. Who thinks so? None, but its particular friends; while others may think it destroys the fundamental doctrines of the Bible and is full of corruption.

I find one great object of the circular is to guard against unitarianism—we profess to be *Christians*, and want no other name; but the unity of God in the person of the *Father* we believe to be the truth. Trinitarians in this country have become alarmed; *an earthquake* has taken place, and portends an explosion. Well may the writer of the circular represent the unitarian doctrine under the metaphor of *a Vortex*. A vortex awfully draws all that comes within the sphere of its operation. Take away human creeds which bind and fetter men, and unitarianism like a vortex would draw thousands to its belief, who are now in bondage. The friends of unitarianism have multiplied in proportion as men have thought for themselves, without the fear of avowing their sentiments. Well may the Preachers be alarmed. An *earthquake* on the one hand, and a *vortex* on the other are truly alarming.

The writer of the circular has given a representation of the unitarian doctrine, which is not believed by many, if any, in this country.

Creeds, as the enlightened Thomas Jefferson declared, have ever been the engines of cruelty. If the Bible will not stand upon its own intrinsic worth, let it fall. It has stood for ages, and will stand till time shall end. Take away human creeds and a fair prospect opens for a union among the people of God; but creeds have ever, and will forever keep

the people of God apart. Christ prayed that his people might be one, will any oppose him?

A Friend to the Bible.

Circular to the Clergy.—The following Circular and memorial, addressed to the Clergy of the United States, has been put into our hands with a request for its publication:—

WASHINGTON, 14th March, 1827.

Reverend and Dear Sir:—Urged by the most powerful considerations, the President and Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society respectfully solicit your friendly exertions in the great enterprise in which they are embarked. Obliged to depend, at present, upon the charities of their countrymen, they cannot but hope, that you will be pleased to bring the claims of their cause before your congregation on the sabbath which shall immediately precede or succeed the Anniversary of the National Independence, and invite contributions for its benefit. As the Society will make application to Congress, at its next session, the managers transmit, herewith, the form of a memorial, which they perceive has been already circulated to some extent by the friends of the Society, to which, should it meet, your approbation, they would earnestly request you to obtain the signatures of those who may regard the object of the Society as one of National interest, and that you would transmit it to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

BUSH. WASHINGTON, *President.*

R. R. GURLEY, *Secretary.*

The Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled.

The prayer of your memorialists, respectfully presents, that among the free People of Colour, residing in different sections of the country, there are many individuals earnestly desirous of removing to some part of the world where they may form a separate and independent community, and that there can be very little doubt, but that, by suitable encouragement to emigration, a similar disposition might be created in the greater part, if not the whole, of that class of coloured people already free.

Your memorialists have also reason to believe, that there are many of their fellow citizens in the South and West possessed, by inheritance, of large numbers of slaves, to whom

they would very readily extend the blessing of freedom, if they could do so without entailing on their country the evils inseparable from a free coloured population, and on their slaves themselves, the dangerous consequences of freedom, unconnected with sufficient inducements and sufficient means for its proper and wholesome enjoyment.

With a view, therefore, as well to encourage the emigration of free people of Colour, as to afford the necessary facilties for the general removal of slavery from amongst those desirous of ridding themselves of its evils, your memorialists beg leave respectfully to suggest to your honorable body, the propriety of providing, on the Coast of Africa, a suitable asylum for the reception of such free People of colour, as may think proper to emigrate, and of such slaves, as the humanity of indiviuals may induce them to liberate, and the laws of the different States may permit to emigrate.

And in connexion with this measure, your memorialists would further suggest the importance of setting apart from the annual revenue of the government, a suitable fund, for furnishing the means of transportation to such free people of Colour as may be desirous of emigrating to the Coast of Africa.

In bringing this subject to the consideration of your honorable body, your memorialists deem it unnecessary to enter into the various and delicate considerations rendering the removal of both descriptions of population in question, desirable. The evils inseparable from them, are too obvious to require elucidation. They are too great to be reached by any means within the power either of individuals, or of the States. And their extension, in a greater or less degree, to every section of the country, designates them as objects peculiarly worthy of National consideration.

To you, then, as guardians of the National weal, the subject is most respectfully submitted, in the earnest hope, as there is none other, involving such deep and extensive interests, it may command your early and untiring consideration, and that the result of your labours may be, to lay the foundation for the gradual and voluntary removal of the greatest evil, with which the wisdom of Providence has been proper to afflict our country.

To the Editor of the Christian Messenger.

DEAR BROTHER, In general I am pleased with you Edito-

and remarks, and also with the sentiments of your correspondent Philip, on the subjects of conference, preaching and church government. Yet I hope I shall be permitted to occupy the place of an inquirer while I state a few things which I wish to see more fully explained.

In the communication of Philip, published in your 3rd No, when stating the duty and business of conference, he concludes, "attend to ordination, if thought proper, when required by the brethren." The same writer in his communication, in your 5th number, says, "The following passages confirm the statement that each church had and selected its own officers, Acts xiv, 23. Titus i, 6. Acts i, 2—6 & vi, 3, 1 Peter v, 1—4, Philip i, 1.

In your piece entitled, "thoughts on preaching," you observe, "nor should they go abroad as preachers until they are sent and recommended by the church," 2 Cor. iii, 1. Acts xiii, 1—4. And again; "That there is a diversity of gifts is evident," Rom. xii, 6–8. 1 Cor. xii, 28, "Of these gifts the church is the best judge."

That it is the duty and privilege of each church to select its own officers and to recommend by letters those who go out from them to administer to others, I have no doubt; and that Christ is the head of the church is equally plain.—But my enquiries are—in whom has he vested the important trust of judging of the gifts and qualifications of preachers? And to whom has he given the authority to induct men to the sacred office of the Gospel ministry? It is implied in the statement of Philip, that the act of ordination is to be performed by the eldership, by the requisition of the brethren, and in yours, that the church is the judge. But I suppose you do not mean that the call of the church is imperative, and that the elders are bound to act upon her judgment. In this point I wish you to be more explicit. I shall, however, state some things for your consideration. Christ, in his own person, called and ordained the first preachers of his gospel: And I would enquire, whether he does not yet call and qualify men for the ministry? And whether it is not his plan to induct them to the ministerial office by the agency or instrumentality of bishops or elders? And whether he has not vested in those agents a special trust, in examining and judging of their qualifications? On this point I shall write a few texts of scripture—1. Tim. iv. 14. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with

the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Thus Timothy was inducted to the office. Tit. i. 5.—"For this cause left I thou in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Here is an appointment or special trust; and the apostle proceeds to delineate the qualifications which those elders must possess: And he gives similar instructions to Timothy;—Ch. iii. 1—7. 2. Tim. ii. 2—"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also:" Verse 14, "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." It appears that elders were to be ordained in the churches, and no doubt with their approbation: But my enquiry is, whether the special and authoritative trust is not vested in the ministry? My remarks and inquiries are equally directed to yourself and Philip, you may either or both answer them just as you shall think proper. I suppose your ideas of the independence of churches are correct; but should be glad to have some further explanation on that subject. In a certain sense each church is independent, & has a right to exercise discipline and manage its own concerns, but the whole number of believers in Christ is one body, and it is important that the spirit of unity should pervade the whole: Preachers are a kind of common property; the churches have a common interest in them. Paul says, "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas." Their commission is:—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." If each church is absolutely independent, and authorised to make or choose her own preacher, and depose or silence him at pleasure, it would be difficult for preachers to fulfil their commission and act in concert as fellow laborers in the harvest of the Lord; and to preserve unity and harmony in the churches.

Philip says, in No. 5. "The church (we maintain is the highest and only religious tribunal to which any member of the body is responsible," and in No. 3. "And every member is alone responsible or answerable to the particular church where his membershp may be." Now I inquire if a particular church is to judge of the qualifications of a preacher and is to induct him to the office of the ministry, and has the exclusive control over him as respects discipline, if other

churches must receive him, or be again deprived of his labors according to the will or judgement of that church?—The membership of a preacher may be in one church, and many others be deeply interested in his labors. That church may depose him and others think it was done unjustly, or in a remote church, there may be charges against him, and it may be impracticable to bring him to an account, in the church where he has his membership. Again, as respects the independence of churches, I inquire, if according to the views of Philip, in governing and being governed, preachers do not stand precisely on the same ground with private members each having one voice? And if so how are we to understand the following scriptures? Heb. xiii, 7—Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. Verse 17, obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account. 1 Thes. v, 12. And we beseech you brethern to know them that labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you.

The Apostle Peter, Chap. v, exhorts elders in their united capacity, to feed the flock of God.—Taking the oversight thereof, &c. And finally enjoins upon them to be subject one to another. And it appears to be consistent and reasonable in case the authoritative trust is vested in them, of committing the work to others, that there should be subjection, and orderly discipline among them, and that no one should be deposed from the office without the counsel and concurrence of the authority by whom it was conferred, and with whom he is a co-worker or fellow laborer.

From Acts xv, It appears that in the church at Antioch there was a dissention and dispute took place between Paul and Barnabas and certain other preachers which could not be settled in the church, and they determined that certain of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders about this question.—and the apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter. And in my experience I have known difficulties to exist with preachers which the particular churches could not finally settle. It was of necessity that they had recourse to a conference or convention of elders. The elders are not to legislate for, or control the churches, but they are overseers, and it is their duty to see that things are in order.

The churches have but little opportunity to obtain a knowl-

dge of or acquaintance with one another; they are generally acquainted with the preachers who labor among them; and if there is order and concert in the ministry, it will be so likewise in the churches, and not otherwise.

In the epistle to the Gallations, Chap. ii, we are informed of a conference at Jerusalem. The particulars are not stated, but we learn that Paul, Barnabas, Titus, James, Cephas and John were there, and at the close they expressed their fellowship and approbation of each other to go on certain directions to preach the gospel.

I have dropped the few hints contained in this paper, with the same view which Philip has expressed, viz: "of eliciting information." Perhaps as much explanation may be required from me, as I have desired from yourself and brother Philip. If so, let the enquiries be proposed and I will answer as well as I can.

PROCHORUS.

TO PROCHORUS.

Dear Brother—We have attended to your inquiries and remarks on church government, and are cordial in giving you what information we possess on this subject, according to your request. You agree with us that it is the duty and privilege of each church to select its own officers, & that Christ is the head of the church. You inquire in the first place, "in whom has Christ vested the important trust of judging of the gifts and qualifications of preachers?" As you agree with us that it is the duty and privilege of each church to select its own officers; then it follows that the church must judge of their gifts and qualifications. Take this liberty from it and tyranny is the consequence. But we suppose you mean by your inquiry, whether the church has divine authority to judge of the gifts and qualifications of a person, and having judged favorably, whether it has authority to commit to him the word, and send him forth to preach it? To this we reply, that it is the privilege of every member of a church to exhort one another. Heb. iii, 13, x, 25 &c. In the exercise of this privilege in the church, a person is found to possess gifts and qualifications to speak to profit and edification. The church judges favorably of his qualifications; but has the church the authority to commit to him the word to teach others also; or to induct him into the ministerial office? We agree with you that the

church has not this power vested in it. It belongs to the bishops or elders. Christ committed to his apostles the word, and ordained them to preach it. "I have given unto them the words thou gavest me," John xvii, 8. xv, 16. 2 Cor. v, 19. Gal. ii, 7. &c. To these apostles he gave authority to commit the word to other faithful and qualified men.—1 Tim. vii, 20—"O! Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babbling, and oppositions of science falsely so called." That committed to Timothy's trust, was undoubtedly the word, with authority to teach others. Hence, says the apostle, "neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by (according to) prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." It is also evident to us that those faithful men, to whom the apostles committed the word, were also divinely authorised to ordain other faithful men to the ministry. Thus Titus was appointed to ordain elders in every city. Tit. i, 5. Timothy also was authorised to commit the word to other faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also, 2 Tim. ii, 2.

Yet we believe that when a church has judged favorably of the gifts and qualifications of any one of its members, and when it believes that this member, is called to preach the gospel, they should present him to the elders for ordination to the work. In Acts vi. we have this matter plainly declared. But we do not think the elders are bound to ordain any thus presented until they are satisfied that he has the qualifications of a Bishop, 1 Tim. v, 22. "Lay hands suddenly on no man." Without the commendation of the church, the elders should ordain no man; and without the satisfaction of the elders, the church should not urge it to be done.—But the church and the elders should be satisfied with the gifts and qualifications of the person, and concur in the matter.

The membership of this person thus ordained is not affected. He is still a member of the particular church with which he was before united, and therefore subject to the same rules of discipline. Should he act disorderly, or commit sin, he is to be dealt with as another member. But should he be charged with preaching doctrines contrary to the Gospel, he should be presented to the conference of bishops and elders for adjudication, as Acts xv. This is the meaning of our brother Philip, when he asserted that

"the church is the highest and only religious tribunal, to which any member of the body is responsible." He had no reference to doctrine, but to practice.

With respect to the independence of churches, you enquire, "If according to Philip's views, in governing and being governed, preachers do not stand precisely on the same ground with private members, each having one voice? And if so how are we to understand the following scriptures. "Remember, and obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, &c."—Heb. xiii, 7, 17. Thess. v, 12.

In the kingdom of Heaven on earth we are persuaded that every member of it is under the same laws and regulations with regard to moral conduct, and that every transgressor is to be dealt with according to the same rule, Mat. xviii,—"If thy brother tresspass against the, go and tell him his fault between the and him alone," whether he be a preacher, bishop or a private member—ultimately—"tell it to the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee a heathen man and a publican." A bishop or overseer is chosen by a church to have the rule over them, to preach to them the word, to admonish them and put in order the things which are wanting among them. He is not to rule, as exercising lordship over them. In performing his duty, he brings to the view of the church the rules of heaven, by which every member is to be regulated.—He is to watch over the church—if any one transgress the rules he must admonish him—if the transgressor continue in sin, the bishop must inform the church, and teach them their duty, as Paul taught the church at Corinth, "to deliver such a one unto Satan," when they were gathered together. This act the church was to perform *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with his power.*" 1 Cor. v, 5.

Every church organised on gospel principles has its overseer or bishop. If every particular church on earth was thus organised, all would be one; not united by conferences, synods, or associations, but by the spirit of truth. The union and independence of the churches are beautifully represented in the apocalypse. The seven churches of Asia are the seven lamps united in the one candlestick. Each lamp was independent of another—so each church was independent of any other. The faults of one are not imputed to another; nor the virtues of one accounted to another.—

Destruction was threatened to one for its evils; while salvation was promised to another for its labors of love.

Dear brother, I must close my remarks. Philip may appear in a subsequent number to answer for himself. With brotherly affection I bid you adieu.

EDITOR.

We have attended for a long time to the unhappy controversy, existing among the Friends, or Quakers in the Eastern states. We are sorry to say that too much uncharitable zeal, virulence and passion has appeared in their disputes. We have been unable to conjecture the issue of this controversy, or satisfactorily to find the cause of it till now. A writer among them called Admonitor, has lately fully developed the cause, in the Christian Inquirer, May 12. Believing it will be acceptable to our readers, we give a few extracts from his communication.

"The crisis that has long been apprehended and predicted, has now arrived, and consequently the doubtful and the wavering must take one side or the other, and abide the issue. Hypocrisy, however consumate, can no longer wear its deceptive disguise, but must be at least once honest from necessity.

It is however, of the first importance to fully understand the points at issue between the contending parties. Some, and indeed I may say almost all, who are not well informed on the subject, apprehend the principal cause of the divisions and dissentions in the society has arisen from a discordance in the speculative belief of the doctrine of the trinity, atonement and divinity of Jesus, and also as to the belief of the primitive Quakers on those subjects;—but such is not my understanding of the case. The true cause of the dissention is of much greater moment than the truth or error of any abstract proposition—it is of more vital importance: it is a contention for the right of conscience, on the one hand, and the flat denial of that common right, on the other. The address from the Green-street Meeting, as stated in the last Christian Inquirer, sums up the whole subject in a few emphatic words, and publishes to the society and to the whole world, that they are "*prepared to promulgate the glorious truth, that* GOD ALONE IS THE SOVEREIGN LORD OF CONSCIENCE, *and with this unalienable right, no power, civil or ecclesiastical, should ever interfere.*" But the enjoyment of this "glorious truth—this unalienable right," is denied by a

misguided and deluded few; which few assume to be, *themselves*, the "sovereign lords of conscience," and claim the exclusive right of dictation—proscribing and denouncing all who question such pretensions. This is the whole subject in dispute. Let but this principle be determined, and there will be an end of the present controversy. If this unalienable right to enjoy religious liberty is conceded and maintained, then there can be no dissentions in scripture explanations; for each will concede to others the privileges he enjoys himself.

But, on the other hand, a *select few*, is admitted to be the "*sovereign Lord of concience*," then indeed is there an end to all Revelation, and the Lord have mercy upon their followers.

It ought to be borne constantly in mind, that the Tolerants, freely and unlimitedly, concede to their opponents the rights they claim themselves, and pretend not to molest the orthodox in the full enjoyment to believe in their doctrine of the trinity, atonement and divinity of Jesus. They claim not to deny them the right of membership for these, or for any speculative opinions. Those opinions on these points, are the same as were held to, by almost all christians before the origin of quakerism; and it is freely admitted they are the very same that are called *orthodox* by his holiness the present Pope of Rome, and the whole of protestant Christendom who assumed to be orthodox. We claim no merit for these concessions; but they are stated for the soul purpose to the right understanding of the controversy Such opinions, whoever may entertain them, cannot, surely, do any harm to a rational mind that dissents from them. And an *irrational* mind, they certainly cannot injure. If we are under a delusion as to the fundamental principles of christianity, we claim, and we deserve the pity and compassion of the more enlightened; not their proscription, and virulent denunciations. To those who honestly believe that the Virgin Mary did *actually* conceive *her own Creator*, and after the usual parturition bring into existence *her own Creator*,—nurse from her bosom, or feed with pap, *her own Creator*;—cleanse, physic, dangle and rock in a cradle *her own Creator*;—surely, those that believe any part of this, deserve the utmost pity and commiseration a fellow man can bestow.—Especially too, when we view this orthodoxy in its real nakedness, without any other covering than plain common sense

will supply. Accordingly to proceed—Mary took, on the 8th day, *her own Creator* to be circumcised. CIRCUMCISE ALMIGHTY GOD!!! Some of my readers may exclaim, hold, enough, and all orthodoxy will cry blasphemy—abominable blasphemy; yet I appeal to every rational mind, if this is not the unvarnished doctrine of the latter. Who then are the blasphemers?

Should any one inquire who has preached this doctrine, I refer them specially to Jonathan Evans and Israel Lloyd, as reported in the third No. of the Quaker, page 72, and also to all the dignified orthodox clergy "from declinature Cox, of Doctor of Divinity memory, to his Papal Holiness inclusive, more especially including Anna Brithwaite's warm and intimate friend, the R. R. Bishop Hobart.

That these apostolic characters now claim, and have long claimed to be "Lords of conscience," and that their *rational* and *independent* followers tamely submit to these claims, is most true. But that a select few, or any number of the society of Quakers should advance such claims, is truly wonderful, and has no parallel since the time of George Keith. I would then respectfully and reverently ask, where the warrant for such claims are to be found? Away with such preposterous and supercilious pretension:—To confute them, is but to state them.

The truth or error of speculative opinions is not then the great, but the minor cause of the present lamentable divisions in society: it is only the consequence of the major cause, which I have endeavored to state in the clearest manner.

The Universalists appear to us fast approaching their dissolution and end. This we learn from eastern prints, and from other sources. An overwhelming majority of them at present deny the doctrine of a general judgment, and future punishment; affirming that every man suffers in time all the punishment for his sins that will ever be required. The doctrine of fatality and necessity, is plainly avowed and zealously urged. Two of their most distinguished leaders have lost their great influence among them. ELIAS SMITH has publickly renounced their doctrine and connexion; and ABNER KNEELAND, formerly of Philadelphia, now of New-York, we learn from the Telescope, May 12, has become a decided advocate for *Robert Owen's System of Communities*; and eulogizing the system has used all his influence to induce people to

embark their substance in the community, he was foremost in establishing. "When Mr. Owen's famous oration was published, denying all revelation, if not even the existence of a Supreme Being, and aiming a deadly blow at all the civil and religious institutions in our highly favored country, Mr. Kneeland, to our surprise and regret, carried the said infidel production into the pulpit on the Sabbath, and made it the subject of his discourse, giving it his unqualified praise and approbation." The Trustees of his church in stating other facts and charges against him, plainly insinuate that he has become a deist. Thus is confirmed the opinion of Elias Smith, not long since published, that Universalism is so nearly allied to deism, that it may be called deism in disguise. We firmly believe that the doctrine now advocated by the majority is nothing better. In fact we have more confidence in a deist's honesty than we have in a man, professing to believe the scriptures, and yet denying the doctrine of a general judgment, future punishment, &c. The Christian Inquirer, p. 166, says:

"This doctrine possesses no power nor energy to reform the sinner; he whose passions and appetites have been debased, corrupted, and strengthened by a course of vice and wickedness, can neither see nor feel any motive in this doctrine sufficient to induce him *to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by turning unto God;* for according to that system, he can live in the gratification of his corrupted passions and appetites, and when he dies, go to heaven, and this is quite enough for him. Accordingly the doctrine of universalism has been regularly preached in some parts of New-England for the last forty years, without one solitary instance of moral reformation."

We are far from saying that there are no good men among the Universalists. The minority zealously oppose the majority in their infidel speculations; yet we think with the Christian Inquirer, that the sentiments expressed above are correct: The doctrine has no power nor energy to reform; and this is confirmed by fact, as far as our knowledge extends. Indeed, we know a body of people not far distant, who were once famed for their piety, and success in winning souls to Christ. A few years ago the greater part embraced Universalism, and are zealous in propagating the doctrine. The consequence is, as might have been expected, they have greatly degenerated from that fervid piety, and success in

converting souls to the Lord. We wish Christians to be aware, and examine well every step they take in this dark and cloudy day. EDITOR.

The Editer receives daily, cheering accounts of the progress and spread of truth from various parts of the United States; especailly from the Southern and Western States. The doctrine of union among Christians prevails, and must ultimately triumph in despite of bigotry and intolerance. The light of the sun may be partially obstructed by a few intervening clouds, but those clouds are transient, and the light will break forth in full lustre before long. Let the motto of our lives be HOLINESS TO THE LORD. In our subsequent Nos. we will present to our readers some accounts of revivals of religion in different sections of our country. Being now supplied with smaller type and better paper, we shall be able to furnish much more matter, and in a superior manner. EDITOR.

TO POST MASTERS.

The Editor has received from the Post Master in this place the following note, to which he would respecfully solicit the attention of those Post Masters who charge postage for the covers of the Christian Messenger:

"*Post-Office, Georgetown, Ky. June* 1, 1827.

"SIR—You inform me that at some of the Post Offices to which the Christian Messenger is sent, the subscribers are charged with the same postage on the covers that they are for the numbers themselves. This, I have no doubt, is improper; and arises from a misconception of the law, by the Post Masters. At this office no postage has ever been charged on the envelopes of Pamphlets, or other Periodicals, even when a list of Agents, Conditions, &c. are printed on them. The proper postage on the Messenger, will be 1 1-2 cents per number, for those sent to places under a hundred miles, and 2 1-2 cents, if over a hundred miles, either with or without covers.

Respectfully yours,

N. L. FINNELL, *P. M.*

Rev. B. W. STONE.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

VOL. I] GEORGETOWN, KY JULY. 25, 1827. [No 9.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—NO. VI.

The doctrine we preached at the commencement of the Revival, and which we urged before and for some time after our separation from the Synod of Kentucky, were not novel, except among the Presbyterians. We labored to convince the unconverted that they were lost sinners, and must be born again, or never enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We endeavored to point out the means of regeneration, as divinely ordained, and urged the sinner to a speedy compliance. These means we declared to be the Gospel, believed and obeyed by the sinner—that in the use of these means he should be born again, be saved or made alive unto God, by his holy spirit given to him. We continually taught that God was the author of this great change, and confirmed the doctrine by such texts as the following: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "Of his own will begat he us."—Eph. II. 10; Jas. I. 18, &c. But we as continually taught that God's revealed plan of effecting this change was by the means of the word or gospel. "Of his own will begat he us *with the word of truth.*"—Jas. I. 18. "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you *through the gospel.*"—I. Corinth. IV. 5, &c. We also every where taught that this gospel had no power, and could produce no good effect on the heart of the unregenerated, "till it was believed by them." "The gospel is the *power of God* unto salvation, to every one that believeth."—Rom. I, 16. "For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, *not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*"—Heb. IV. 2.

This doctrine preached by us, was considered a novelty and innovation by many of our Presbyterian brethren. For this we incurred their displeasure, and suffered much opposition from them. It is a fact which cannot be denied,

that the doctrine of Trinity and atonement, which we afterwards received, and for which we have suffered such bitter opposition, were at that time never preached by us; and indeed, the doctrine of atonement was unknown to any of us, till sometime after our separation from Synod; and I believe the common notion of trinity was by all of us believed, except by myself on the point of the pre-existence of the Son of God. The doctrine of satisfaction to law and justice, we preached without having once doubted its correctness. [See Apology, p. 68.] The truth of this statement may be doubted at this day by many, who can hardly believe that this doctrine, which we then preached, could have been opposed by Presbyterians. To remove this doubt, I will briefly state the difference between our doctrine and theirs. We both viewed the sinner in a state of death and alienation from God, exposed to eternal damnation: We both agreed that the gospel was the divinely appointed means of salvation, or regeneration: But we contended that this means would never prove effectual alvation or regeneration, till the sinner believed it; and we insisted that he was capable to believe. They contended that the sinner was as unable to believe as to make a world; and therefore if he was saved, God gave him faith, or wrought it in him by some mysterious divine power; a *power* extraneous from the word.—We taught that the spirit and all the promises of the new covenant were given through faith, or were received by the believer. They taught that the spirit, though a promise of the covenant, and faith, were given to the sinner in unbelief. This difference was viewed by us all as very great.—The one was connected with the whole system of Calvinism; the other with the gospel of God, as we humbly believed.

Justice requires me to state that Presbyterians have become more liberal in their conduct since that boisterous period. To prove this I will state a fact: Soon after our separation two learned and pious presbyterian preachers, Thomas B. Craighead and John Todd, were deposed by the Presbyterians for preaching the same doctrine, that a sinner can and must believe the gospel, and by this means receive the spirit, and be saved.—But some years after, the presbytery restored Mr. Craighead without one acknowledgment of his error, or any change of his sentiments. They also restord dMr. Todd in the same manner, as I have been credibly informed. This proves that the voice of their confes-

sion of faith has but little authority, and it is hoped, will shortly be lost in the loud cry of the gospel.

I will now make a few extracts from the *Apology* by which our views of the gospel at that time shall be clearly exhibited.

The gospel we defined in the language of the Angel, to be "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke ii, 10. An epitome of which is, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii, 16. The love of God is the spring, or moving cause of all the benefits of the gospel. His love to the fallen world is absolute, and must be so declared to mankind. To say that God loved us on condition that we should love him, would destroy the very idea of the Gospel. "We love him because he first loved us," 1 John iii, 10. 19.—The whole world of mankind is the object of God's love, and to which he has given his Son without exception. This truth we confirmed by the following arguments.

1. Because Christ is the constituted savior of the world: "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," 1 John iv, 14. John iii, 17. xii, 47. vi, 33. 1 Tim. iv, 10. &c.

2. Because all are invited and called to believe and come to him as their Savior, Isai. xlv, 22. Matt. xi, 28. Isai lv, 1. Rev. xxii, 17. &c. How can we account for these invitations, and offers, made to all, if Christ be not given to all? How could we reconcile the conduct of a prince or sovereign, who should propose terms of pardon and peace to his rebellious subjects, when at the same time substantial reasons existed, why he could not accede to his own proposals? If Christ be not given to the whole world, then that *part*, to whom he is not given, have no right to any thing in him more than the fallen angels, nor can they be invited to receive Christ or his benefits in *truth* and *sincerity*. Besides how can their punishment be aggravated for rejecting Christ, when he never was, nor could be sincerely and truly offered to him?

3. Because he died for all, 2 Cor. v. 14–15. 1 Tim. ii, 6. Heb. ii, 9. 2 Pet. ii, 1. John i, 29. That Christ died for all we farther argued, because sinners who hear the gospel shall be finally condemned for not believing and obeying it. "He that believeth on him is not condemned. He that believeth not is condemned already; *because* he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God

John iii, 15. 2 Thes. i, 7–8. John xii, 58. Jas. ii, 12. 1 John iii, 23. But how can this be required of those for whom Christ did not die? Would not such be required to believe an untruth? And can we think that the judge of all the earth would condemn his creatures for not believing a lie? If Christ died exclusively for a part of the human race, unbelief follows of course. The scheme furnishes no proper foundation for any one to make an application of the promises to himself; and no one, holding this system, can believe till his mind is drawn off from it, and his attention fixed on the promise of a faithful God. We farther taught, that with Christ is freely given all his fulness, or all that is in him; for we have no authority to believe that a partial Christ is offered to any. "He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things. "Rom. viii. 32. In him is the fulness of grace, life, salvation, pardon, wisdom, righteousness sanctification, redemption, and the spirit without measure. All these he received as gifts for men, even for the rebelious, ps. lxvii, 18. Acts ii, 39–40, &c.

These are the provisions of the gospel, equal to our most enlarged capacities, boundless as our desires, and infinite as our wants—all treasured in Jesus, and with him given, freely given, and offered to a lost world. They are represented, (Prov. ix, 1–5) by a feast, prepared for sinners: Those, invited, had no hand in preparing the provisions—all were ready before the guests were invited—they were only to come and receive what was already prepared for them.—The same truth is taught by our Lord himself by the figure of a supper; the servants sent to invite the guests were authorised to say, "Come, for all things are now ready," Luke xiv, 16–25.—No qualification was required as necessary in the guests.—Their believing the report of the servants did not set one dish on the table; nor did their coming give the food its nourishing quality—all things remained the same whether they came and partook or whether they staid away.

The Lord Jesus requires no excellent distinguishing qualifications to bring us within the reach of his Almighty arm. He saves freely and voluntarily.. He delights in the work of saving sinners. His very heart breathes forgiveness; and he rejoices over them as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride. He wants no reward before the work is done. In this respect every sinner stands upon equal ground; there is no dif-

ference between the king and the beggar. He lays down before he takes up, and strows before he gathers. Neither does he require the vigorous help of his helpless creatures; *his own arm brings salvation; we are his workmanship.* He does not divide the work, nor take a sinner in hand to finish what he had begun. He calls all the ends of the earth to look unto him, and be saved: saved, not in part, but in whole, from beginning to end.

The Gospel contains facts in themsleves, which require nothing from us to make them true. It is a fact, that the *great supper* was prepared, whether those invited believed it or not; or whether they came, and partook of it or not. Their believing the fact could not make it more true. So it is a fact, that God has absolutely given to the world his son, with all his fulness; whether we believe, or disbelieve; whether we receive, or reject the gift. To insert any condition in the Gospel, on which its truth should depend, would be to destroy its very nature; or to cover it with such a mist of darkness, that no one could see its reality. Thus to say that Christ died for us, on condition we should believe on him, is to cast a veil over the truth: for we should then have no certain end of his death, and therefore no foundation for our faith.

The absolute freeness of the provisions in Christ is represented by the manna provided for the Israelites in the wilderness, John vi, 32. The manna was given to all without exception, to those who loathed it, as well as to those who loved it. "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. The spirit and the bride say, come; and let him that heareth say, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. xxii, 17. Water is free to all, and no money, or price is required to purchase it. So are the provisions of the gospel. No good works, no qualifications are previously required; no time is allowed to obtain them. But all are exhorted now, immediately to come. *For behold, now is the accepted time behold now is the day of salvation.* And, *To day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* Whatever the situation of the sinner may be—though his sins be like crimson, and for multitude as the sand on the sea shore; yet has he a sufficient warrant now to believe the gospel, and receive its provision. For if the gospel does not authorise him *now* to receive its provision, it does not suit him *now*;

and while he goes to seek for qualifications, death may put a final period both to the means, and the end. Besides, if the gospel require previous qualifications; while the sinner is seeking them, he is obeying it; and should death, in the mean time, carry him off, he could not be condemned on the principles of the gospel. But neither could he be saved: for, by the supposition, he is yet without the provisions of the gospel; and therefore, destitute of spiritual and eternal life. These qualifications, by whatever name they may be called, are legal; and instead of preparing the soul to receive the gospel, they are turning it away from Jesus Christ.

The gospel, then, invites all to come *now*, and at no other time. Therefore it bids all welcome just as they are. But lest any should after all be discouraged, God proclaims his disposition to sinners in such a manner, as to remove every doubt and fear. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live: turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?" Ezek. xxxiii, 11. The Lord, is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentence." 2 Peter iii. 9. "Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. ii, 3. "He waits to be gracious." Isa. xxx, 18. "He is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their tresspasses unto them." Cor. v, 17. 1 John iv, 5.

God sits upon the mercy-seat to dispense grace and mercy to the lost race. None but sinners need mercy; therefore none but sinners have any business at the mercy-seat: and no other character does God receive there. The rich he sends empty away. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. This man (Christ Jesus) receiveth sinners, the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind, the chief of sinners. If Christ receiveth sinners only, then every attempt of the sinner to make his condition better, before his coming to Christ, is an attempt to throw himself out of the reach of Christ and of mercy. As long as he remains out of Christ he remains out of *the way, the truth, and the life.*

This we conceive to be *that gospel*, which Christ commissioned his apostles "to preach to every creature in all the world." Mark xvi. 15. "To as many as they should find." Matth. xxii. 9.

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

[CONTINUED.]

John xx, 31. These are written, &c.

In a few preceding numbers, having established the point, that the scriptures are the cause and foundation of believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; having considered the import of the names *Christ* and the *Son of God*; and having attended to the evidence that Jesus is the *Christ* the *Son of God*, we now proceed—

4thly. To the effect of this faith—"and that believing ye might have life through his name."

That life—spiritual and eternal life, is the effect or consequence of faith, appears to be as plain a truth, as any revealed in the Bible. The text under consideration is decisive on this point, and might set this doctrine forever at rest.—To remove every doubt we will introduce a few more texts. John v, 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John iii, 15. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." 36. He that believeth on the son of God hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the son, *shall not see life*; but the wrath of God abideth on him." We confess, we should be awfully afraid, in the face of these plain declarations, to say, that a sinner is by nature so dead that he cannot believe, and through believing obtain life. The sinner is dead; but this death does not prevent him from hearing; and "faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Rom. x, 17. The Lord thus addresses the dead sinner, "hear and your soul shall live." Isai xlv, 3. Jesus to the same effect said, "He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."—"The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the son of God, and they that hear shall live." John v, 25, and xi. 25.

If the world were so dead in sin that they could not hear nor believe the gospel, we cannot see the wisdom of God in addressing the gospel to them, more than to the rocks and trees—we cannot see his goodness and justice in condemning them to eternal punishment for not hearing and believ-

ing, when these things were impossible to them. What should we think of a father, who, seeing his little, deaf son playing in the yard, should call him to come to him—the child does not hear and therefore does not obey. He repeats his calls—still the child is inattentive. Provoked to madness, the father unmercifully beats and stamps his child in fury. Would not all hiss the wretch from society?—Would not justice call aloud for vengeance? Dare we represent the God of justice, and of mercy, as acting thus to his creatures? Could we blaspheme his name by a representation more horrid? And yet in a christian land, where Bibles are common, many alas! how many are doing it!! No wonder that infidelity abounds, where these doctrines are zealously preached as the truth of God.

The Lord conduct towards his fallen creatures is beautifully represented in Rev. iii, 20. "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." When we see a man standing and knocking at a neighbor's door, we immediately conclude that he desires to go in—that his purpose is not to force the door and enter by violence—that he believes the people within can hear and know the meaning of his knocking—and that they are able to rise and open the door. But if the man knew that all the people within were deaf and could not hear the sign given—if he knew that all within were dead or unable to move one step—would he not act foolishly in standing without and knocking and urging them to open the door? We think so, and therefore we dare not impeach the wisdom of God by imputing such conduct to him. If his plan is to force the door of the sinners' heart, why does he stand and knock?—If he knows they cannot hear, why does he plead and urge arguments with them to open the door? If he knows they are dead and cannot move, why does he urge them to rise and open the door?

There are many who represent mankind as dead as Lazarus in the grave, as unable to hear or believe as he was; they do this in order to magnify the riches of God's grace in saving sinners; but while they do this, hey surely forget or overlook the dishonor they cast upon his perfection, character and word. From this representation proceeded the doctrines of Calvanistic election and reprobation—partial grace and particular redemption, with the whole chain

of that system. If the doctrine for which we plead, be true, it is of immense importance—a tremendous truth. They who oppose it ought seriously to think whether they may not be laboring to destroy the foundation of the gospel plan—the character of its author, and the salvation of sinners. We have no doubt of the honesty of many in advocating a contrary doctrine. Their error lies in mistaking the meaning of a few passages of scripture, and in closing their eyes against any other exposition of them, though that exposition be in perfect connection with the whole passage. A few of these texts we will consider.

John vi, 44. "No man can come unto me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him"—Here they commonly stop without adding the next verse.—"It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh in to me"—We now ask, who cometh to Jesus?—The text answers, *every one that hath heard and learned of the Father* We again ask; how did the Father teach them?—He spake to them by the prophets. By them the Father predicted the coming of the Mesiah—the time and manner of his coming—the place and circumstances of his birth—the works of his life—his rejection, death, burial, resurrection and assention, with the minute circumstances attending them—the Father also taught them that Jesus was the Son of God by an audible voice from heaven, proclaiming distinctly. "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleassed—The Father taught this same truth by the miracles he performed by his son. For said Jesus, "It is not I that speak, but the Father in me, he doeth the works." And these works testified that he was the son of God. When the Jews heard and learned these things of the Father respecting the Son, they believed that Jesus was the Christ and came to him for life and salvation. They were drawn to Christ by the power of truth. But without this instruction they could not have come to him. For he that cometh must first believe, and this faith is produced by the evidence given, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Matter of fact confirms this interpretation; for as soon as the Jews were convinced that Jesus was the Christ they came unto him.—The same is true in every age since that day.

How forced, how unnatural, and how unscriptural is the common exposition!—That God draws sinners by some mys-

terious, irresistible force. If this be true, how can he condemn any for not coming to Christ? How can that declaration be true, that *he is no respecter of persons*? How could the savior complain that the people would not come unto him that they might have life? How could he invite and urge them so kindly to come, when he knew they could not?

Acts xviii, 27. "Who (Apollos) when he was come, helped them much, who *had believed through grace*." Hence it is concluded that grace was received before faith. But the next verse shews that the grace spoken of was the scriptures; "for he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing *by the scripture*, that Jesus was Christ." The gospel is called *grace*, because it is the revelation of God's grace to sinners; Tit. ii, 11–12. "*The grace* of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us &c." To affirm that grace is received prior to faith, contradicts the many texts that teach us, that by grace we are saved through faith. As grace is one of the promises of the new covenant, and as Paul teaches that the promise is given to them that believe, we certainly conclude that we must believe prior to our receiving grace.

Rom. xiii, 3. is confidently urged in support of their doctrine. "According as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." It is evident from the connexion that by faith is signified the gospel, which is frequently so called, as *the faith once delivered to the saints—the faith to which many of the priests were obedient—the faith from which Elymas sought to turn away the deputy*. Jud. iii, Acts vi, 7. xiii, 8. &c. The measure of faith is simply the measure of the gospel. To one man is committed the gift of *prophesying*, to another ministering, to another, teaching &c. These are different *measures* of the gospel dealt out to every man, Comp. 1 Cor. xii, 28.

We cannot, in so small a work, take notice of all the texts pressed in to support this doctrine, so fraught with error and danger. We humbly ask its advocates to admit that they are fallible; and we entreat them to re-examine the texts on which they base their doctrine, by the connexion, and by the whole tenor of scripture.

We now proceed to describe *the life*, spoken of in the text, as the consequence of faith. We remark, that it does not mean *simple* existence, for on earth the wicked exist, and yet are dead, or destitute of life—in eternity they will exist for-

ever, and yet forever be destitute of life, or remain in death. This life is spiritual, supported by spiritual food, the bread which came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall never die, but live forever,—John vi. 50–51. This bread, we are informed by the saviour himself, is the Son of God revealed in the word of truth, as having lived, died, and risen again, and now alive forever more. He was the food of the ancient saints *in promise*. They like Jeremiah ate the word, the word of promise, and it was the joy and rejoicing of their souls. Saints now live on the same food, Christ in his beauty, his worth, his relations, and his glory.—Hence said Paul, "It is not I that live, but Christ in me."—"Christ is our life." "Our life is hid with Christ in God."—God himself is the source of this life—it flows from him through Jesus the Mediator to every believer. The sinner by faith is represented as grafted into Christ, the living vine—by this he becomes united to Christ, and by this union he receives the life, the spirit, and support of Christ, as the branch does from the vine with which it is united. The believer is as dependent on Christ for support, for life, for the spirit and the fruits of the spirit, as the branch is on the vine. "For by faith they stand," "and without me ye can do nothing." Let it be well remembered that before faith there is no ingrafting into Christ, no union with him, no divine life, no holy spirit received, no fruits of the spirit borne. How vain then to plead for, and expect life, the spirit, or any grace in Christ before we believe in him, and thus become united to him!

This life is not confined to the soul, but also extends to the body. While we are in mortality, the body feels its divine and quickening influence; but in the resurrection from the dead, the body becomes immortal and united with the soul, shall live forever, perfectly stript of all the evils of mortality and completely filled with all the bliss of eternity. No more sickness, sorrow, nor pain—no more tears, nor death, nor the fear of it forever. The Kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy contains the countless millions of glory, perfect love unites them in one harmonious band forever.—No more discord, nor evil surmising; no more hard thoughts nor unfriendly language; no more jarring creeds nor discordant notions; no more party spirits, nor party names—These earthly evils shall never ascend nor enter the paradise of God. Happy the man, who enjoys this divine

life on earth; but how inconceivably more happy, when it is perfected in eternity. Who would not forego the sickening trifles of a day, for the glorious realities of an everlasting life? It is offered to all without money, and without price—It is brought within the reach of all the human family; for "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name."

EDITOR.

TO THE CHRISTIAN BAPTIST.

Brother Campbell: Your talents and learning we have highly respected—your course we have generally approved—your religious views, in many points, accord with our own—and to one point we have hoped we both were directing our efforts, which point is to unite the flock of Christ, *scattered in the dark and cloudy day.* We have seen you with the arm of a Sampson, and the courage of a David, tearing away the long established foundations of partyism, human authoritative creeds and confessions;—we have seen you successfully attacking many false notions and speculations in religion—and against every substitute for the Bible and its simplicity, we have seen you exerting all your mighty powers. Human edifices begin to totter, and their builders to tremble. Every means is tried to prevent their ruin, and to crush the man, who dares attempt it. We confess our fears that in some of your well intended aims at error you have unintentionally wounded the truth. Not as unconcerned spectators have we looked on the mighty war between you and your opposers—a war in which many of us had been engaged for many years before you entered the field. You have made a diversion in our favor, and to you is turned the attention of creed-makers and party spirits, and on you is hurled their ghostly thunder. We enjoy a temporary peace and respite from war, where you are known.

From you we have learned more fully the evil of speculating on religion, and have made considerable proficiency in correcting ourselves. But, dear sir, how surprised and sorry were we to see in your 10th No. vol. 4, a great abberration from your professed principles. You there have speculated and theorised on the most important point in theology, and in a manner more mysterious and metaphysical than your predecessors. We refer to your exposition of John i,

1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Please, sir, attend to a few friendly remarks, designed to correct in time what may hereafter become of more serious injury, than any system before invented by the wisdom of man.

You have assumed very high grounds, from which you look down upon all the christian world, and see them at an immeasurable distance below you—the Calvinist midway between you and the Arian—the Calvinist on a mountain, the Arian on a hill, and the Socinian on a hillock. From this eminence you see a vast difference between the Calvinist and Arian; but on a page or two before, you could discover very little, if any, difference between their views of the Son of God. The ground you occupy is too high for common minds to tread. I should be afraid to venture, lest giddiness should be the consequence. I would advise my dear brother not to soar too high on fancy's wings above the humble grounds of the gospel, lest others adventuring may be precipitated to ruin. Not that I should advise you to settle on Calvin's mount, on the hill of Arius, or on the hillock of Socinus, (these are all far too low,) but on the holy mount of God, revealed in his word. This, though high as the heavens, is safe for all to tread.

You object to the Calvinistic views of Trinity and of calling Jesus the *eternal Son of God*, for reasons which have long since induced us to reject them. Yet, my dear sir, we confess we can see no material difference between your views and those of the Calvinists. What you call the WORD, they call the *eternal Son of God;* yet you both believe the Word of God, and the Son of God to be the one, self-existent and eternal God himself. We are led to conclude this of you, because frequently you apply the term *Eternal* to the *Word*—as "his eternal glory"—"his eternal dignity"—"co-eternal with God"—"the eternal relation betwixt the Savior and God." We believe that whatever is eternal, is also self-existent and independent, and therefore God supreme. We cannot think that you believe in two eternal Gods, though some of your readers may draw this inference from some of your expressions—you speak of "the relation, which the Savior held to the God and Father of all, *anterior to his birth*"—"the relation existing between God and the Savior *prior to his becoming the Son of God*;"—"the *eternal relation* between the Savior and God."—W

have always thought that a relation implied more than one; and that if God from eternity had existed alone, there could have been no relation between him and non-entity. We view these expressions of yours as unguarded, and not designed by you to communicate what the language imports; as when you say, "God from eternity was manifest in and by the *Word*." It might be asked, to whom was he manifest from eternity, if he alone existed from eternity? Again, that you and Calvinists differ only in phraseology on this subject, while you believe the same things appear in another particular. What they call the human nature of Christ, or the man Christ Jesus, you call the *Son of God, Jesus, Christ, Messiah, Only Begotten* They believe that the human nature of Christ existed not till born of Mary; you believe and declare that "there was no *Jesus*, no *Messiah*, no *Christ*, no *son of God*, no *Only Begotten*, before the reign of Augustus Cæsar." Neither Calvinists nor Socinians should impeach your orthodoxy on this point. The Calvinists maintain that the eternal son of God, who was the very and eternal God himself became man by taking to himself a reasonable soul and true body, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in *the Womb of the Virgin Mary*, of her substance, *and born of her*.' "Confession of Faith, Lar. Cat. Ques. 37 and 47 &c.!! You say, the *word*, by whom all things were made "became flesh and dwelt among us. He became a *child born* and a son of man."

You may deny that you ever affirmed the *word* to be the only true God. Then we would humbly ask you, what was it? Was it an intelligent being or a mere name or relation? We think the query important. If it was an intelligent being, and "co-eternal with God," as you say, then it must be the eternal God himself, or another eternal, distinct God. If it be neither of these, then it must have been an eternal, unintelligent name or relation, or in your own languarge, it was *the sign or image of an idea*, which idea is God. Shall we think that the *word*, which was God, and by which all things were made, and which was made flesh, was nothing but an unintelligent name, relation or sign of the only true God? Can this be the saviour of sinners? We dare not impute this absurdity to you, but we fear your unguarded speculations may cause the less informed to err.

Permit us dear brother, to propose a few queries for your consideration, and we hope for our profit.

1. When it is so frequently asserted of the son of God, that he came down from heaven—that he ascended up to heaven, where he was before—does not this language naturally convey the idea that he was there prior to his coming down, and consequently before the reign of Augustus Cæsar?

2. What can be the meaning of John vi, 38. "Jesus saith unto them—I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will but the will of him that sent me."? Was this Jesus who spake, the only true God? How could the only true God say, I came—*not to do mine own will*—!! *but the will of him that sent me*—!!!? No christian can apply this to the only true God. Was this Jesus the person that never existed till the "reign of Agustus Cæsar? How then could he in truth say, I came down from heaven, where he was before? The text cannot apply to him. If he was not the only true God, nor the person that never was till Cæsar's reign, it must be *the word*, whom we call the son of the living God, God's *own* son, his only begotten—his first begotten—brought forth before the world was; yet we agree with you, and the generality of all sects in the present day, that he was not eternally begotten, or eternal son. We plainly suggest these objections to your scheme to elicit information?

3. How can John xvii, 5, be reconciled with your views? Father glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee before the word was." This person could not we think, be the only true God; for if he was, he prayed to himself (v. 3) Will christians say that the only true God prayed to himself to be with himself, to be glorified with himself, and to restore to himself the glory he once had with himself, but which he had not now (therefore changable) &c. Should we not consider a man deranged who should thus fervently pray to himself to be with himself &c.? We dare not impute this to the only true God; nor can we apply the text to the person who began his existence under Cæsar's reign, for this person that prayed, had a glory with the Father before the world was, and therefore must have then existed. If it cannot apply to the only true God, nor to the person who had no existence till Cæsar's reign, to whom can it apply? Surely not to a mere name, or unintelligent effulgence, or relation.

4. Again, Who was the person spoken of in 2 Cor. viii, 9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, he became poor, that ye through his

poverty might be rich."? It could not be the only true God, for he is unchangeable—nor could it be the Jesus or Christ, who existed not till Cæsar's day, for he was never rich in any sense and became poor! We ask, who was he?

5. Who was the person mentioned Phil. ii, 6—10? The whole passage plainly shews it was not the only true God—nor the person, who never existed before the christian era.

6. Who was the person that said, "A body hast thou prepared me, O God?—The person that *took* flesh and blood?—Heb. ii, 14. x, 5.

7, Is it any where said that the word created or made any thing (*hup'autou*) by himself as the original cause? Is it not always said, that all things were made (*di'autou*) by him as the instrumental cause? as Eph. iii, 9. God created all things (*dia*) *by* Jesus Christ—1 Cor. viii, 6. "But to us there is but one God, the Father (*ex*) of whom are all things--and one Lord Jesus Christ, (*di'hou*) *by whom* are all things."—Heb. i, 2. "God in these last days hath spoken to us by his son (*di'hou*) *by whom* he also made *the worlds*"—the material worlds, Heb. xi, 3. "Col. i, 16. "All things were created (*di'autou*) *by him*, and for him." It is true in the beginning of this verse *en auto* is used, but in the same sense. The Greek Fathers of the second and third centuries, commenting on those texts above quoted, say that *hupo* means the original or first cause, and that *dia* signifies, the second or instrumental cause. Thus Philo, Origen, Eusebius and Cyril, who certainly better understood their language than we do. (Clarke, on Trin. p. p. 91, 92.) Doctor Clarke also remarks, that this was the constant and unanimous sense of the primitive church. If these observations be true, will it not follow undeniably, that the *Word* (*di'hou*) *by whom* all things were made, was not the only true God, but a person that existed with the only true God before creation began; not from eternity, else he must be the only true God; but long before the reign of Augustus Cæsar?

We are not sticklers for names; we can grant to you, without any relinquishment of principle, that this person the Word, never bore the name of *Jesus, Christ, Messiah, or Son of God*, till the reign of Augustus Cæsar? but we cannot say with you that these names solely belong to him; for Joshua was called Jesus, Cyrus was called Messiah, or Christ or anointed (for the Hebrew is the same)—and Adam was called the Son of God. Heb. iv, 8. Isai xlv, 1. Luke iii, 38.—

But the person of Joshua existed long before he was called *Jesus*, or Saviour—and the person of Cyrus existed before he was called Messiah or Christ. This name he never bore till he was anointed and appointed by God to restore captive Israel. So we believe the intellient person the *Word* or the *Son of God*, existed long before he was called Jesus, Christ or Messiah.

Dear brother, we submit these thoughts to you and the public, from the purest motives, which we have already stated. We did design to make a few remarks on your speculations on the relation of a word and idea. We think the application of this to God and the Word, is foreign from the truth and meaning of the spirit. But the short limits of our work forbid us to write more. With sentiments of high respect and brotherly love we bid you adieu.

EDITOR.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN REGISTER.

A certain king, whose administration had always been peculiarly distinguished by mildness and equity, at length discovered, that an enemy had been tampering with his subjects in a particular province, and by artful suggestions of the unreasonable and grievous requisitions of their sovereign, and by many good words and fair speeches in favor of the different treatment, enjoyed in his dominions, had caused a dissatisfaction, which ended in a universal revolt. The king, unwilling to inflict on these revolters the punishment, merited by their disloyalty, sent a messenger with full power to assure them of pardon upon condition of their compliance with certain terms within a prescribed period. As they had become sensible into what straits they had brought themselves by their wickedness and folly, such a messenger of good tidings, and with indisputable credentials, was received with general acclamations of joy.

The chief anxiety of those, who appeared most sensible of the iniquity of their revolt, and of the importance of returning to their allegiance, was to ascertain with precision the requisitions of the king, and to prepare themselves to act accordingly. Another class for a while, though not, perhaps, with equal quietness, yet without any particular symptoms of uneasiness, appeared to be making commendable preparations for a return; but at length the disputers of this world, who think it more glorious to argue, than to obey, re-

laxed their appointed means of reconciliation to the king, for the purpose of ascertaining the exact standing of his plenipotentiary. Some argued with great warmth, that he was in all respects equal to the king; and said much about the requisitions of the king that his subjects should honor his messenger, as they honored him; that obedience to his messenger should be considered, as obedience to him. They also laid much stress on the declaration of the messenger, that he, and the king, who sent him, were one. Although the inconclusiveness of this reasoning, and the repeated assertions of the messenger, that he spoke and acted merely in the name, and under the authority of the king, led many to dissent from these opinions; yet, influenced by a wish to lead quiet and peaceable lives, and by the impression, that nothing more was necessary to their own, or to the safety of others, than faith in this personage, as the kings messenger, and correspondent conduct, they pursued "the noiseless tenor of their way," declining to strive about words to no profit, but to the subverting of themselves and their hearers. At last, however, being in a manner compelled to take part in the contest, they maintained, if not with equal *warmth*, in the opinion of many with equal *strength*, that the messenger was not equal to the king, but superior to all his other subjects. Others contended, that the messenger was made in all respects like unto his brethren; and that his superior power and authority were merely the consequence of his commission from the king. In process of time a considerable portion of the revolters assemble, and in council, or synod, *voted*, that the only true faith was that of those, who believed the king and his messenger to be absolutely one and the same; and unmindful of the limited nature of their power, forgetting that it was the extent of their ability to *vote* mankind to destruction, they declared that none of a different faith should be partakers of the blessings, which the king's messenger came to publish. Those, however, who were thus denounced, having the king's proclamation in their hands, in which were clearly stated the conditions of pardon, and recollecting, that they were amenable to the king, and not to his subjects, regarded the denunciation as an idle tale.

It is worthy of remark, that such was the nature of the king's requisitions, that to understand and obey them, required a dispassionate deportment. It will, therefore, be readily perceived, that, in the heat of the contest, they were but

all prepared to learn the king's will, and to fashion their lives accordingly. Many had almost, or altogether, forgotten the object, for which the messenger came among them; and the period allotted for reconciliation, was rapidly hastening to its close. At the expiration of this period, the revolters were all summoned before the king to give an account of the manner, in which they had treated his overtures of mercy. It then appeared, that the highest approbation and reward were bestowed on those, who immediately, and without controversy, studied to know their Lord's will, that they might be prepared to perform it; but it is consolatory to learn that all, however different in their speculations, who had not lost so much time and temper, as to be unable and indisposed to obey, were finally restored to the favor of their sovereign. It appeared, however, that *some* had been so busily engaged in determining the character of the messenger, and in bringing others over to the right faith, that the things, pertaining to their own peace, had been utterly neglected. But what was the answer of the king, when they alleged in extenuation of such neglect their anxiety to preserve from degradation the character of his messenger? "He was not sent among you, that his character might be a subject for curious and idle speculation; that you might ascertain his precise relation to me, or his rank among my subjects; that you might perplex yourselves and others with subtile disquisitions, entirely foreign from the object of his mission; but simply, that you should conform to his requisitions. It was sufficient for you, that he exhibited adequate testimony of his authority to act in my name; and, by neglecting his instructions, you have contemned my authority, debarred yourselves from a title to my favor, and are still in a state of rebellion."

REVIVALS.

Wayne County, Ky. April 13, 1827.

As the news of reformation is ever heart cheering to every true saint of God, I send you the following, that through the medium of your useful publication, they who peruse its pages may share with us a measure of this blessing, I have travelled and preached for about twelve months through the counties of Russell, Pulaski, and a part of Wayne, and have been constrained to praise God, for the reformation in

the hearts and lives of the people. In Russel county there is a Church of the Christian order, that has increased from four to thirty within twelve months. I left them last Monday morning, rejoicing in the Lord, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. There is also a great number of souls on the way to Zion, that desired the children of God to pray for them. On the Lord's day the 8th of April, we had the happiness of seeing about an equal number with us of our Methodist and Baptist brethren surround the table to commemorate the death of our Lord and Savior. I know of but one that stayed back. The Lord wonderfully blessed us at night. The cry for mercy mingled with the shouts of joy, manifested that God was in the midst of us. For nearly twelve months no night has been too dark, no day has been too cold for the people to meet and worship God in Pulaski, Wayne, and Russell. The harvest truly is great, and the laborers are few. We earnestly desire the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers. As God works by the instrumentality of human agency, use your endeavors to send us some help. The war has been very hot in these parts. The army in support of creeds and orthodoxy, against the advocates for the Bible alone; but it is pretty well over.

JAMES LUNSFORD,
An Elder in the Church of Christ.

From a letter published in the Gospel Luminary, by Elder Ephraim Philbrick, of Rye, New-Hampshire, dated April, 24, 1827, we have an account of a glorious reformation in that country. He states, that "having been much thro' the town in this reformation, I have taken pains to get the names of those who have recently experienced a real change from nature to grace; the number from 16 to 70 years of age, is 58; and the number from 8 to 16, is 65; the whole number 123. Also a number of backsliders have been reclaimed." This revival still continued. He also informed us of a good revival in Stratham, Portsmouth. North-Hampton, and in Hampton. He does not tell the number of converts in those towns, except in the last, in which he says there are upwards of 100.

From another letter, published in the same work, written by Elder Samuel Rand, dated Portland, April 11, 1827, we have a cheering account of a revival in that country. "The

work," he says, "has been going on for eight weeks past, in a very powerful manner. There are from 20 to 30, who come forward at a time in great distress, to be prayed for." Forty have been added to the church, and many have found comfort, who have not yet come forward. I cannot tell you the number that are under distress of mind. The work progresses. In Westbrook also, he informs us many have found a Savior to the joy of their hearts.

A letter addressed to the Editor from Elder James E. Matthews, of Alabama, near Florence, dated March 27, 1827, says, "We have lately had a very reviving season.—Last Saturday and Lord's day, eight persons were added to the church, and in a few months past, sixteen have professed faith in Christ. Last Sunday evening I baptised six, one of whom was a poor sinner, crying as they did on the day of Pentecost, "What shall I do?" I gave him Peter's direction; and being baptized, he came up out of the water rejoicing. I anticipate glorious times in this neighborhood. The people are generally in a state of serious enquiry. Prejudice is giving way. Several of the Methodists communed with us *last Sunday*, and the church appears to be in perfect harmony.

Elder Wm. D. Jourdon, recently addressed the Editor a letter from Monroe, Tennessee. He informs us that in the neighborhood of Sparta, Tenn. within some months past between 300 and 400 souls have been added to the Christian Church. The work was still advancing, and truth prevailing.

In Greencastle, Putnam county, Ind. a county not settled more than five years, is a good work. A small Christian church was formed there not long since, and from the last account it had increased to upwards of 200 members.

Brother Wm. M'Murtrey some years ago moved to the wilderness of Missouri, where he began to preach the gospel. He lately wrote to the Editor a letter from Fredericktown, dated April 12, 1827. "I have had," says he, "a long and tremendous storm of persecution, beating on me.—I thank my God, it is rapidly passing off, and calmness is succeeding in all its beauties. I flatter myself much good will be done in those regions. My churches are still in-

creasing, and the people appear to be engaged about the salvation of their souls."

From a worthy brother in Giles county, Virginia, we have just received a letter, stating that there were six Christian Churches in that county, containg about 200 members. Of these we had no accounts before. In Pennsylvania & Virginia, within a few years, a great number of Christian churches have been constituted, and large additions are made to some, especially in Bedford county, Pa. by the labors especially of our worthy and faithful brother, William Caldwell. From South-Carolina, York District, we have had good accounts of the spread of truth and religion by the instrumentality of Elder John L. Davis.

A brother, M. Morris, of Indianopolis, writes to the Editor, June 13th—"Four Baptist Churches in this county have discarded all Creeds and Confessions, and constituted on the Bible, as the proper rule of faith and practice. Another brother, Doctor Mitchell, from the same place writes respecting these churches, since they have constituted on the Bible alone:—"They are now daily adding to the church, and much good is doing in that connexion. They have free communion with all brethren, who are baptized on the profession of their faith. Thus you see they are on the road. They are getting tired of the doctrine of trinity. They believe there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The Doctor adds, "Liberal men and principles must prevail, and will ultimately triumph. The world do not feel themselves bound any longer to believe the creeds and doctrines of men; because they baffle the understanding and prostrate reason. Applications to know what we ought to believe are not now made to Popes, Bishops, nor Priests, but to the word of God. Even the learned orthodox are shaking off from creeds and *human* platforms.

In Bourbon county, Ky. a Christian church was constituted a few weeks ago. The Lord is carrying on a good work there, and at every meeting some are joining. The first Lord's day of this month, we had a communion there.—The crowd was great and the people solemn. Some Baptist brethren of high respectability communed with us,

mong whom was a worthy preacher. On the same day we baptized four. The prospect is good.

We have lately had the pleasure of perusing a letter from Elder ELIAS SMITH, to Elder T. M. ALLEN dated, Boston April 30, 1827. From which we make the following extracts, which we are sure will be read with pleasure.

I will give you a short account of my progress since leaving *Universalism*, which was about 16 months ago. I began first to preach, or "do my first work," and preached to a few only; sometimes in Boston, and in Roxbury near Boston.—A few brethren knew the voice, and attended with me.—The leading members were in general against me, though they had prayed for my return. Some influential brethren who heard me, labored for an union between them and me, but to no purpose. Last summer 8 or 9 concluded to withdraw, and unite together according to the New Testament. From May to March we met in a large Hall, until more met than could be accommodated—the day the church was publicly acknowledged, there were 19. Since last Aug I have baptized 20; these with the others amount to about 40, who have from the first day until now lived in love and peace.

The first of this month we moved our meeting to a very large Hall, near the centre of the city; Though it is about three times as large as the other, yet as many meet as can be seated with comfort. The attention has increased gradually, from the first day until now; several have of late given good evidence of "*passing from death unto life.*" Four weeks ago I baptized 3; yesterday I baptised 4 more; and several others expect soon to submit to the same *command*.

Extract of a letter from Elder Joseph Badger of New York, to Elder T. M. Allen, dated Feb. 25, 1827.

Our brethren in these parts are in a state of prosperity.—Union and steadfastness prevail in the churches, and in many places we have revivals; in upper Canada the Lord is doing wonders; and in this state the Lord is raising up able young men to preach the word. Seven worthy Elders have died the past year, in our connection in the East; yet the ranks will be full; and when you and I sleep in death, I trust the pure *doctrine*, the system of *liberty* which we have taught will *triumph*.

I have received two numbers of the "Christian Messenger"

which I read with pleasure, and wish my aged brother and venerable friend Elder Stone, success in his arduous undertaking—and hope the Messenger will be a message of glad tidings to thousands.

Brother Stone—Please to insert the following lines in the next number of the Christian Messenger:

NOTICE.

On the Friday preceding the fifth Lord's day in September next, our Christian Conference will commence at Big Spring, in Overton county, West Tennessee, four miles north of Monroe, and twenty-five south of Burksville, Ky. and is expected to continue five or six days. We hope the brethren and friends, who live within a reasonable distance, will come prepared with provisions, to camp on the ground; otherwise we fear the neighborhood will be oppressed beyond measure, by the expected multitude. We solicit the attendance of laboring brethren from all parts.

Elder W. D. JOURDON,
June 2, 1827. JOHN COONS, Sen.

We have seen the first number of the "Morning Star," a periodical, edited monthly by Elder Elias Smith, of Boston. It is a duodecimo pamphlet, of 24 pages, at one dollar a year. From the known abilities of the Editor, and from the specimen of the first number, we hope it will eminently subserve the cause of religion, to which it is devoted. We recommend it to the patronage of the friends of truth

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To Correspondents.—A great many communications are thankfully acknowledged. In so limited a work as ours, we cannot immediately attend to them. But they shall be noticed in subsequent numbers.

OBITUARY.

DIED on May 28th, at his father's, in Bourbon county, Elder *LEVI PARKER*. He had been ordained to the work of the Lord a few years before; but for a long time had labored under a breast complaint, by which he was at last taken from this world. He was a man of deep piety, and of a sound mind. He suffered patiently and died triumphantly.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"*Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*"—PAUL.

VOL. I] GEORGETOWN, KY AUG 25. 1827. [No 10.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—NO. VII.

FAITH.

Having shown how the Gospel effects regeneration, by being believed, we are naturally led to speak of faith. We have already shown that the word of God is the foundation of faith; but it will be necessary to say something further on this subject. "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." John, xx. 31. "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 2. Cor. II. 5. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Rom. x. 17. "When he (Christ) shall come to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." 2 Thess. I. 10. "How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?" Rom. x. 14. "Howbeit many of them that heard the word believed." Acts IV. 4. "In whom ye also believed, after that ye heard the word of truth the Gospel of your salvation." Eph. I. 13. "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, who testified, he told me all that ever I did. John IV. 39. "As he spoke these words many believed on him."—Chap. VIII. 30. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also, who shall believe on me through their word."—Cap. XVII. 20, &c. &c.

The word of truth is not only the foundation of faith; but it has sufficient evidence in itself to produce faith (see Deut. xxx. 11. and John xx. 31.) Faith can have no existence without evidence. "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." John III. 27. If a fact be stated to us, which is accompanied with sufficient evidence, we believe it. Faith does not depend upon any disposition, whether holy or unholy; but on the strength of the testimo-

ay. No Christian will deny, that there is sufficient evidence in the *word* to produce faith. For if there is not, God cannot require us to believe it, nor condemn us for not believing, when it is impossible to be believed. But many say, though the evidence be sufficient in itself, it can have no access to the mind in its natural state. To this we answer, that evidence, under such circumstances, is no evidence to us.—And therefore neither God nor man ought to wonder, if we do not believe.

The word, or testimony of God, is to be believed in the same manner as we believe the testimony of one another.—This is evident: See John i. 9. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater;" and therefore can, and ought to be received by all that hear it.

As faith is a simple idea, we cannot give any definition of it, that will make it plainer than it is already. And it would have been happy for the church, if no other definition had ever been attempted. But if the reader, according to custom, must have one, we say—*it is admitting testimony, upon the authority of the testifier*: Or, *it is simply believing the testimony of God.* Many elaborate treatises have been written to explain what *faith*, or *believing* is, with no better effect, than to destroy its signification. A child of a few years old understands *believing* as well as a doctor of divinity.

Some have defined it *coming to Christ, flying* to him, *trusting* in him, &c. which are not faith itself, but the fruits, or consequences of it. For none will come to him, till they hear and believe the report of the Gospel; that he is, and is able and willing to save them.

Some have distinguished it into various kinds, as faith of *credence; historical; temporary;* the faith of *reliance; assurance*; of *miracles;* and *saving* faith. But all these are one and the same act of the mind, believing various truths, as God has revealed them.

The Apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, expressly describes the nature, fruits, effects, or consequences of faith, as he does also in his other epistles, sometimes directly, and sometimes indirectly. In Chapter x. 38, 39, he tells us it is *that* by which *the just shall live*; and it is *believing to the saving of the soul.* In Chap. xi. 1, "It is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen." Verse 3, It is giving credit to the divine testimony respecting the *Creation*, as related by Moses; "Through faith we under-

stand the worlds were framed by the word of God," &c. Verse vi, it is *believing that God is, and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;* and the consequence of it is *coming to God.* But we cannot know these things, in the first instance, any other way than by admitting the testimony of God, which *is the evidence of things not seen;* and is opposed to experimental knowledge, which is *the evidence of things seen,* or experienced. It is believing the testimony of God, as in the case of Noah, Abraham, &c. Verses vii, viii, &c. without any other evidence; nay the evidence of sense, and experience had hitherto contradicted it. It signifies the same thing respecting dividing the Red sea and Jordan, and the passage of the Israelites through them; the falling of the walls of Jericho, &c. &c. Now the *act* of believing in all these cases is the *same;* though the *objects* of their faith are *various,* and the effects produced on the mind accordingly.—As we have already said, faith influenced Enoch to *come* to God. It moved Noah with *fear:* it induced Abraham to leave his country; it gave Sarah strength to conceive seed; *for she judged him faithful that had promised.* Verse xi. It influenced the Israelites to venture into the midst of the mighty waters; to surround the walls of Jericho, &c. &c. See its wonderful effects, described at large throughout this chapter, and elsewhere frequently in the word of God.

We see, then, from what has been said, the simple nature of faith, and its use in regeneration. If, therefore, the Gospel believed, or faith in the Gospel produces, or effects regeneration, it necessarily precedes it. This is as evident as that the cause precedes the effect, and the means the end. But as this is an important point, we will add some further proofs to the many already mentioned. "For ye are all the children of God, by faith." Gal. iii. 26. If we become children *by* or *through* faith, then it is plain we were not children, or born again, before faith. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." John i. 12. Therefore before they believed they were not the sons of God. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. iv. 5. Here we see the *ungodly* are the persons, who are justified; but as God justifies none but them that believe, therefore the ungodly believe; and so faith precedes regeneration.

To assert, that regeneration precedes faith, is to destroy the very foundation and nature of the Gospel. No unregenerated sinner would then have any warrant to believe; he would be more solicitous to work *for* righteousness than to believe *unto* righteousness; and until he imagined he had the evidences of regeneration in himself, he never would regard the Lord Jesus as the Saviour of sinners. It is in fact the foundation of *legality*. Upon this plan the Gospel ceases to be glad tidings to sinners; for sinners have no right to any thing the gospel reveals.

In the *great supper*, already mentioned, the faith of those who partook of it, did not depend upon the provision they ate; nor the sight of the well furnished table; but upon the report of the servants, who invited them. So the faith of those who partake of the gospel provisions, does not depend upon their partaking; but upon the report of God in the gospel. We grant that partaking the provisions of the gospel strengthens their faith; it adds to the testimony of God, *that* of sense. Then they know *experimentally*, that the report of the servants is true. Should those invited reply to the servants, that they could not believe there was such a supper provided for them; they would not act more foolishly than those who say they cannot believe in the gospel, till they partake of its provisions. The very act of taking, or receiving the provisions of the gospel is an *exercise* of faith: and therefore faith necessarily precedes receiving them.—As, therefore, faith precedes partaking the provisions of the gospel; so it does not depend upon the reception of them for its foundation.

Now, as we before proved, that salvation, pardon, eternal life, divine light, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, the fulness of the spirit, &c. are the provisions of the gospel; and that faith precedes the reception of them: therefore it follows, that faith does not depend for its existence on partaking any of them; but necessarily precedes all.

Will any say, that faith depends upon salvation? No; for the scripture every where asserts, that salvation follows faith. *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.* Will any assert that it depends on pardon, or justification? No; for we are justified by faith.—Does faith depend on spiritual life for existence? No; for "these things are written, that ye might believe; and that believing ye might have life through his name."

Does its existence depend upon the Spirits powerful, enlightening, quickening, and sanctifying influences? No: for we receive the Spirit *through faith.* Gal. III. 14. "That we might receive the promises of the spirit through faith." See also verse 25; "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise." Eph. I. 13. Faith does not depend upon grace; for by faith we receive grace. "By grace are ye saved through faith," &c. Eph. II. 3. "By whom also we have access through faith into this grace wherein we stand." Rom. v. 2.

As, therefore, faith precedes the reception of the gospel provisions, it cannot be a part of those provisions, in any other sense than as it is a *medium* of *divine appointment*, through which we receive them. If it belongs to the provisions of the gospel, then it is absolutely out of the creature's reach. And would God damn a soul for not having faith, when he had it in his own hand to give or withhold, at sovereign pleasure? With equal propriety might he damn him for not creating a new world. For the one is as much above his power as the other. Faith is no where promised, but always represented as that through which the promises are received.

Thus, according to promise, we have given you a brief view of the Gospel; and we desire that you will not take these things merely upon our word, nor the contrary upon the word of any other person; but search the scriptures daily, with an humble dependence on God for the necessary aids of his spirit, and see whether these things are so.

To the Editors of the Baptist Recorder.

We have read with some interest your periodical work. We have paid some attention to the controversy between *Aleph* and *Beth* on the doctrine of Creeds and Confessions. We should have been better pleased, had they confined themselves to the point in debate, and not have descended to the low grounds of personality.

Beth pleads for the principle, that "the people have a divine right to interpret the scriptures, each one for himself, and each voluntary association of believers (or church) for itself."

Aleph admits the principle as a self-evident truth (No. 7.) and thence infers that "churches (even Sectarian churches) have a right to think, to speak, and to act—that is to make

a Creed." We cannot but view this inference as illogical; for the principle is not whether a church has *a right to make a creed*, but whether a church has *a divine right* to make a a creed. From this illogical inference, that a church has *a right* to make its own creed, *Aleph* infers that a church has the right or privilege to deny admission to those who reject its creed. Had he proved from the New Testament, that each church had *a divine right* to make its own creed, and to deny admission to such as rejected its creed, the controversy had been settled. But this he has not done, nor attempted to do, nor is able to do. Advocates for creeds, human authoritative creeds, meddle very little with the Bible to prove their positions, because this book gives them no countenance. They are rather disposed to refer us to history, and the operation of human laws, governments and courts, and from these deduce their strong arguments. If Aleph means that every church has a *divine* right to make a creed, and to deny admission to snch as reject it; then it cannot be denied that the Roman Catholic Church has this divine right, and that exclusion from that church is *divine*, because the right to do so is *divine*. Whatever, therefore, they bind on earth, is bound in heaven. Does not Aleph plead against the whole world of protestants and their adherents, as justly and *divinely* excluded from the Church and from Heaven? Does he not plead the justification of the Church of Rome in exercising the *divine* right given it, by excluding such as rejected its creed? Does he not know that this principle, for which he pleads, is the same as that for which the Roman Catholic pleads, with a mere shade of difference? For the Catholic denies the people the right to read and interpret the scriptures for themselves, they must learn the scriptures from the reading and interpretation of them in their creed. Aleph grants the people the right or privilege to read the scriptures, but they must read and interpret them as they are interpreted in the creed. Though he admits that a church, being fallible, may err, and not give the true interpretation of the scripture, yet still it has a *divine* right to deny admission to such as reject its creed, though the person refused may have the true interpretation! Does not *Aleph* know that this was the very principle opposed by the Reformers, Luther and his coadjutors? and that the very principle for which they contended was that for which Beth pleads—that every one had a

divine right to read and interpret the scriptures for himself without being trammelled with a creed. Does Aleph by seeing this divine right abused, wish to relinquish the principles of the reformation, and return to those of the Roman Catholic Church?—to prostrate liberty, and re-establish tyranny?

Should it be denied that God has given the Roman Catholic Church the *divine* right to make a creed and to deny admission to any that reject it, by what scriptural arguments can it be proved that any other church has this *divine* right? We are assured that such arguments can never be produced. Yet Aleph thinks that they who have no creed are Latitudinarians. I would ask him, what were the Baptists in England prior to 1643? Till that period, it is believed, they had no creed, no authoritative creed. What are the Baptists in Rhode Island? They were the first settlers of that State; they had no authoritative creed then, nor have their worthy descendents any from that time. It is true a creed has been lately attempted to be imposed upon them, but they indignantly reject it. What was the whole Church of Christ for the three first centuries? They had no creed but the Bible. Were all these worthies *Latitudinarians*? We think not, in the sense of Aleph.

Should it be proved that this divine right is given to the Baptist, still there would be a difficulty to know to which of the various sects of Baptists it is given. Each has the same claims. This point must first be settled before any can feel conviction of error or danger in being denied admission or excluded. But Aleph, in true latitudinarian style, says that *each church (even a Sectarian church) has this right.* Then it follows that Catholics, Reformers, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and all other Sectarian Churches, have equal claims to this right of making their own creed, and of denying admission to such as reject it! Who then can be saved? For each, exercising this right, denies admission to another into the church and into the kingdom of Heaven. None can deny this to be a just inference from the principles assumed and advocated by Aleph. The claiming and exercising this right of making creeds, and of denying admission to such as reject them, have been from the beginning or introduction of them, the source of incalculable evils to the church—they have divided it into innumerable contentious sects, which have disgra-

ced christianity by their unchristian debates and strifes about their peculiar notions—they have made orthodoxy the test of religion, and orthodoxy is measured by the creed of each party—they have thrown the church into confusion and distraction—they have sunk religion in the estimation of the world, and prevented its divine influence on their hearts—they have discouraged the pious, and caused infidelity to abound. Can Aleph think seriously that such a right is divine? Do not the evils, arising out of this right, prove its origin to be human? Shall we introduce and apply such a right to divine things? Let this be done, or rather continued, and we shall soon see religion pushed out of the world, or shaped to the conveniency of every man.

Aleph may deny that a *divine* right is given to a church to make a creed and to deny admission to such as reject it. What shall we then call it? If it be not divine, it must be human. On this point there is no controversy. A church in our free country has a right to do a thousand things; to live in pleasure and in sin; to work wickedness; to say all manner of evil against others; and, in the language of Aleph, to think, to speak and to act, that is, to make a creed, and to deny admission to those who reject it: But who will say that a church has a divine right to do these things? This is the main point, which he evades to touch.

But he lets us know, why he so zealously pleads for the right of making a creed, that it may be a "test of fellowship, and a fence against corruption." Is orthodoxy, then, the test of fellowship? Orthodoxy—measured by the creed or standard of every party? This truly is a *fence* against truth, and the union of Christians;—a *test* to the destruction of fellowship, as facts plainly show. But Aleph calls a creed "a fence against corruption." By corruption he means undoubtedly, errors in doctrine and practice. I would humbly ask, whether the creed has ever produced this good effect? are there no errors in that church? no sin, no moral evils? If there are, of what use is the creed, seeing it does not answer the purpose of a fence? We think the Bible alone can answer at least as good a purpose. But as every church has a right to make a creed as a test of fellowship and as a fence against corruption, then the Methodist Church has as good right to do so, as the Baptist—and as the creeds of each church are vastly descrepant, it follows that fellowship is fenced out, and corruption fenced in by the one

or the other; and probably by both. If ever there is fellowship or union betwen them, it must be in opposition to their creeds and fences.

Aleph sees the necessity of a creed in order to keep out from the Church the Pedo-Baptist, the Arian, and Socinian. I would ask, does the bible keep them out of the Church? If so, what need of a creed. If the Bible does not exclude them, who shall presume to do it? We are neither Pedo-Baptists, Arians nor Socinians; yet God forbid that we should reject or despise any of these little ones that believe in Jeses as an all-sufficient Saviour, and who proves the sincerity of his faith by a holy walk and conversation. Were we to reject Arians and Socians, we believe that many of the reputed orthodox would be found in their ranks.

Aleph with every other person, who pleads for human creeds and confessions, labors to establish a party in opposition to the union of Christians. Partyism and union are perfectly opposite ideas, and both cannot be right; both cannot be agreeable to the will of God: one or the other must be wrong. The union of Christians is the will of God, the prayer of Jesus, and the means of bringing the world to believe in Jesus, therefore it must be right. That man is then engaged in a righteous work, who labors to promote this union, by removing every obstruction to it; and as creeds are pre-eminently in the way of it, he labors in a good work, who is engaged to banish them, with all party names, from the world. But the man who acts a contrary part must be wrong, and engaged in a work in opposition to the will of God, the prayer of Jesus, and the salvation of the world.—Many honest men are not apprized of these things, and therefore continue in their course; but it is believed that increasing light will soon convince the pious and honest of every name of their error, and then will they in spirit flow together in one body, and convince all that Jesus was sent by the Father to be the Saviour of the world. These thoughts are submitted to you and to the honest inquirer after truth.

EDITOR.

UNIVERSALISM—No. III.

As the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is the grand scheme, and last effort of the Almighty (so far as we know) to enlighten, to reform, and to save the world; and as all the rays of divine light concentre and

shine conspicuously in it; here, if the doctrine under consideration have any foundation in truth, it may be found. In our last No. we think, something was said, shewing conspicuously that the doctrine in question has no place in the New Testament. But that it may be seen that the uniform language of that book is against it, we will quote a few more evidences from it. To cite every passage which bear upon this question, would be to transcribe a large portion of the Christian Scriptures, and would carry us beyond the narrow limits, we have prescribed for ourselves: We shall, therefore, content ourselves by noticing some few of the plainest and most unequivocal declarations of Christ and his Apostles, which bear upon this point. The reader will bear in mind that the proposition which we are considering is this: "That all rewards and punishments are confined to this life; that virtue rewards the virtuous, and vice punishes the vicious." Then, "to the law, and to the testimony." John v, 28, 29. "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Could language more clearly than this, express the doctrine of rewards and punishments after death? We confess we can conceive of none that could. Comment is unnecessary. The good, shall come forth from their graves, to live forever with the Saviour; but the evil, the wicked, to be damned; to be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power." In the 2d chap. of Rom. It is declared, that God will render to every man according to his deeds: that he will render eternal life, to those who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, immortality; but to those who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, he will render indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish. For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

Now reader, ask yourself, What is that reward which God will render to every man according to his deeds? Paul answers; to them that continue in well-doing, he will render as a reward, eternal life. But to them, who are conten-

tious, and do not obey the truth, he will render as a punishment, indignation and wrath.

Again, reader, ask; when will God thus render to every man according to his deeds? Paul again answers: "In that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." But says an objector the doing of any act, such as rewarding, or punishing, implies a beginng and an end; but an eternal reward cannot be given, nor an eternal punishment inflicted, because neither will have an end!! If this is not sophistry I know not what deserves that name.—Will not God give eternal life to his people? O, Yes! This is a favorite sentiment with the Universalists. But will not this be an act of the Almighty? Certainly. Then according to the objection, this eternal life must end, and the whole race of Adam, must leap into the desolate abyss of nonentity.

This objection overturns the whole system of universal restoration, and establishes that of universal destruction!! 2 Cor. v. "We labor to be accepted of the Lord: For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Now does not this text necessarily imply, that if the Apostle did not labor he would not be accepted with the Lord? and that, consequently, when he shuold appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, he would be punished for his evil deeds? But if our preacher had heard the Apostle make this declaration, he would have said, (as in effect I heard him say,) "you are mistaken, Paul, your laboring in the ministry, cannot advance you one step towards Heaven; it may affect your condition here, but it can have no bearing upon your future destiny. All the evil in the world is good in the view of the Almighty, as tending to consummate the happiness of man in the future world: The Almighty, therefore, equally recognizes a Cruel Nero as his servant, who seeks to put down christianity, as a Paul, who seeks to establish it."

For how could an Apostle, or how can we consider any man a friend of God, and of righteousness, who teaches that even sin itself is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; that we could know nothing of happiness without it; that the greatest sinner and the most devout christian, both rise to Heaven to share in the same eternal happiness as soon as they die? Jesus says, Luke xii. 4, 5,—"Be not

afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do: But fear him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell, yea, I say unto you, fear him." Can this text be reconciled to the doctrine of no punishment after death? We think not. We know, however, that a caviller, who wishes to evade the truth, might say, "Though the Almighty hath power to cast into hell, yet he will not do it."

But this would represent the Saviour as acting the part of a mother who seeks to govern her children, by holding out to them false terrors of ghosts and witches. She knows there are no such things, but then it would be unsafe to tell her children so. So the Saviour, upon this principle, knows that there is no hell into which the wicked will be cast after death, but the world must not know it!! It is said in Rom. 8, "That all things work together for good to them that love God." Now this certainly implies that all things do not work for the good of those who do not love God. And yet according to the doctrine we are opposing, all things in in the world are just as they should be, and are working for the eternal happiness of all men! Paul said his afflictions were working out for him an eternal weight of glory, while he looked not at the things that were seen, but at those that were not seen, which were eternal. And yet, after all his labours, his watching, his praying, his sufferings by sea, and by land, his imprisonments, and stripes for Christ's sake, he had not a whit the advantage of the vilest sinner that ever lived, if the doctrine of our preacher be true! In Luke IV, the Saviour, in teaching the people to be humble, and merciful, among other things, says to this effect: "When thou makest a feast call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy rich neighbors, least they also bid the again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind: And thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just.

Here the doctrine of future rewards is as clearly stated, as language could state it. We shall therefore leave it without comment, to speak for itself. In Rev. XXI. 7 & 8, we find these words: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth

with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Now upon the principle of no future punishment, what can this mean:—"he that overcometh shall inherit all things."

For we know, that the most pious are not unfrequently, the most destitute of the blessings of this life. The all things, therefore, which he that overcometh shall inherit, refer to a reward that shall be given in another life—refer to a place which he shall have in the holy city, spoken of in the connexion, in which it is said that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death; for the former things are past away." This shall be the reward of the righteous: a reward worthy of a God to give, and worthy of man to receive.

But while the righteous shall be thus exalted to the city of God, (O dreadful contrast!) the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and whoremongers, &c. shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.

Now, none can suffer the second till they have suffered the first. And that the second will follow the natural, or first death of unbelievers, is clear from another portion of scripture, in connexion with that just referred to. It reads thus: "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire."

Here we read of a general judgment, which is to take place after the dead small and great shall arise and stand before God. And also, that all who are not found written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death.

TIMOTHY.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Ohio, April 30, 1827.

My strange Brother—I have been lately favored with an opportunity of perusing a few numbers published by you, and entitled the "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER," and am pleased to find that some of its contents agree with its title; therefore as a young and earnest enquirer after truth, and believing from the pages of your Messenger that you and some of your subscribers are fully adequate to the task of amply elucidating the most, if not all theological subjects, I have assumed the liberty of honestly proposing a few questions to be inserted in one of your numbers. Should you be so good as to give them an insertion, please to answer them as lengthily as your pages will admit, or solicit some of your subscribers to make some general remarks on them, and do it hastily, for our King's business requires haste.

Question 1. Is there a gospel Church now existing in the world? If there be where is she?

2. Are the present divisions and subdivisions of all the professed Christians in the world, *the wilderness* into which the woman took her flight, and there continued for twelve hundred and sixty days?

3. Is the present administration of the ordinances of the Lord in any denomination a Gospel administration?

4. Is it essential under the present discrepancy of the government of Churches and of men's opinions, that the Clergy of different denominations should presume to plant or establish Churches (so called) under the name of "the branch, or branches of the Church of Christ?"

5. Shall we from the face of scripture look for a period of time in which primitive order and ancient gifts will be restored to the Church, and all the people of the Lord be consolidated into one body?

Yours in the bonds of Christian love.

AN ENQUIRING STRANGER.

The Editor wishes some qualified brother to answer these queries for the next number.—If not done by another, he pledges himself to do it. The enquiring Stranger must exercise patience.

EDITOR.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Dear Brother:

As your paper is designed to detect error, and disseminate truth, I transmit to you a few lines respecting some of my difficulties on the popular doctrine of trinity. From a child I have been accustomed to hear trinitarian preachers. They have stated the doctrine as an incomprehensible mystery, and urged the belief of it as essential to salvation. Not long since I heard a popular preacher in my neighborhood. In the former part of his discourse he declaimed against mystery in revelation, affirming that what ever was revealed, ceased to be a mystery—that mystery and revelation were of directly opposite import. Presently he introduced the doctrine of trinity, and labored to develope its mystery by a familiar simile; the court of appeals, he observed, was composed of three men, and these three were one court. So the trinity was composed of three persons, and yet but one God! Good Lord! Is the mysterious doctrine of trinity at length unmasked and explained? And must I believe it or be denounced a heretic, and sentenced to eternal perdition? For several days my mind was fixed on this subject, and strangely agitated. Can there be a court in Heaven, composed of three intelligent beings, like our court of appeals, who can counsel, dissent or agree according to their judgement! If so, I concluded, these must be three independent and eternal beings; and indeed our preacher said, that each of these beings or persons was independent God.

To the Bible I went, honestly enquiring after truth, and determined to rest on no decision, but what was found there. I was soon convinced from the old and new Testaments that the doctrine of trinity was no where taught in the Bible—I shall only mention a few of the many texts which occurred to my view. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Deut. vi, 4. "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the Lord, he is God, there is none else besides him." Deut. vi, 35–39. 1 King viii, 60. Isa. xlv, 5. 6, 14, 18, 21, 22, &c. But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him."—1 Cor. viii, 6. Of the Son of God the scriptures every where represent him, as the Son of the living God, God's own Son, his only begotten Son. From these expressions I concluded

that if he was the Son of God, he was not God himself, the self existent God. For the very idea of a Son implies derived existence. Hence said the Son, "I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." John vii, 38. I also found that the Son was mediator between God and men. 1 Tim. ii, 5. But if he were the self-existant God, how could he mediate between himself and his offending creatures? Of the Holy spirit, I could not conclude from any thing I read in the Bible, that it was a distinct person from the Father and Son, and equal to them. For it is said *to be poured forth*, and *to be poured out* upon the people by the Father and by the Son, and when the redeemed are seen and heard worshiping the Father and Son in heaven, there is no mention made of worshiping the spirit. Nor can I find any precept or example for worshiping the spirit any where in the Bible.

Thus by reading the Bible I have been led to the above conclusions; my mind is happily relieved from embarrassment, and joyfully engaged in the work of the Lord. O that all would read the Bible for themselves, and labor honestly to understand it and live according to its precepts!—All would then imbibe the same spirit, and flow together in one Body. Yeurs respectfully.

PETER.

QUERIES PROPOSED FOR INVESTIGATION BY ELDER C. NANCE.

1. What is the work of an evangelist?

2. Is every pastor an evangelist in his respective church? or does an evangelist preside over a specified district?

3. If so, who appoints him, and to whom is he accountable for his conduct? We earnestly desire to understand the subject, that we may know our duty, and act accordingly.

It is hoped that some one, who understands these subjects, will give us satisfactory information for our next number.

EDITOR.

We have just received the two first numbers of a periodical, called the "Lamp of Liberty," published in Cincinnati, by the "*Liberating Community.*" We have hastily glanced over the work, and are sorry to say, that it appears to us as far removed from the meek and humble spirit of chris-

tianity, as any we have ever seen. While they boast that the Universalists "were never known to be persecutors," yet they manifested an unusual degree of hostility to all who receive not their views of the doctrine of Christ, and plainly declare non-fellowship with them all. But against none have they emitted more of their venom, than against us. By this we view ourselves as receiving more honor than is in justice our due; because we are led to conclude that they view us pre-eminently in their way of spreading what we are constrained to think pernicious doctrines.

They have made some very harsh strictures on a small piece we published in our 8th number, respecting the Universalists; and represent it as *falsehood, calumny, wilful lying* and *slanderous misrepresentation.* At first, we thought to let them pass unnoticed, as we have others of a similar cast; but at length concluded to make a few remarks, lest some might think their charges correct. We said in number 8, "That an overwhelming majority of them (the Universalists) at present deny the doctrine of a general judgment, and future punishment; affirming that every man suffers in time all the punishment for his sins that will ever be required." In reply to the expression, "an overwhelming majority deny the doctrine of a general judgment," they say, that "this assertion is very far from bearing any resemblance of truth —that neither a majority nor minority of Universalists deny the doctrine of a general judgment." By the general judgment we understood that taught us in the New Testament, and believed in by all who profess Christianity, except the Shakers and the *majority* of Universalists—that which is so ably defended by Timothy in the present number. That they deny this general judgment, their own words shall prove, without appealing to "eastern prints." They say "We believe that *judgment has come upon all men. That he that believeth not is condemned already*, and that as no person can be legally condemned without being first judged and found guilty. *Now is the judgment of this world*, John XII—in order that the condemnation and punishment due to the transgressor, may be awarded day by day. This doctrine is the doctrine of the Universalists. We believe then in a general judgment, but we limit it to this life, and believe that every man suffers in time all the punishment for sin that will be required."—p. 28. This confirms the fact that they deny what the scripture and the generality of Chris-

tians call the general judgment. They have introduced three mutilated texts of scripture to shew that they believe in a general judgment, not one of which, it is believed, has any reference to that event.

They quibble at the expression, "an overwhelming majority." In the Christian Inquirer, a periodical printed in the city of New York, for March, 1827, are contained these words. "All (the Universalists) unite in the belief that the wicked are punished for their sins; but some contend that it is only in the present life, while others believe that it extends to a future state of existence, but is disciplinary and for a limited period; the former class is probably THREE TO ONE of the latter." This I called *an overwhelming majority*, and fear not a contradiction. It is well known that those of them, who deny future punishment in another state, also deny what we call the general judgment.

They represent us as unchristianizing the Universalists. This we have not done with respect to the minority, with whom alone we are acquainted; for we expressly stated in the very article, which has irritated the *liberal community* to madness, that "We are far from saying that there are no good men among the Universalists. The minority zealously oppose the majority in their infidel speculations."—We have known some truly good men of this latter class; but we have never heard any of them say, that they were converted from their evil ways by the belief of this doctrine. No: it was received afterwards. With the majority we are unacquainted; but were we to judge from the doctrine and spirit manifested in their numbers, we must entertain an unfavorable idea of their piety. While they boast as the *liberating community*, and promised liberty to others, we fear they may be the servants of corruption" 2 Pet. ii. 19.

They farther say, "Our editor (B. W. Stone) if not believed by some respectable preachers of his own society (who are intimately acquainted with his private sentiments) is as far from believing the doctrine of endless misery, as any Universalist. "Unhesitatingly we pronounce the charge false; and it is not believed by us, that any preacher, *respectable* or not, in our society, will ever say that we informed him we did not believe the doctrine of endless misery. We have ever opposed the doctrine of the Universalists from a full conviction of its being an error. I have recently informed that a book is circulated in in some parts of Ohio,

under my name, in defence of Universalism. I boldly declare it a base fabrication of some impostor.

The Liberating Community proceeds to say, "There are [is] a number of respectable preachers in our certain knowledge (whom we could name) at this time in full connexion with the Christian body, called New Light, who are quite as much opposed to the blasphemous doctrine of endless misery, as any of the honest Universalists are; but still keep themselves behind the curtain, concealed in the dark." If they are behind the curtain concealed in the dark, how did the Liberating Community become acquainted so well with them and their sentiments? We aver they are yet concealed from us, we know them not. We have heard such things stated of one or two in our connexion, but know not whether the statement be true or false.

About 25 years ago, while I was in the orthodox view of atonement, my mind was for a few days much bewildered, and inclined to think more favorably of the Universalian scheme. I applied myself closely to reading the Bible, and was soon convinced that it was not a Bible doctrine. Had I retained the idea that Christ died for all to make satisfaction to justice, I should certainly view the minority of the Universalists as more consistent than many who are esteemed orthodox.

"TIMOTHY" was in type for this No. before the "LAMP" was received. We view it as a sufficient reply to the doctrines advanced in that work. EDITOR.

ON PRAYER.

Prayer is the offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will. The habitual performance of this duty produces that habitual sense of the presence and inspection of God, and of our entire dependence upon him, which is the foundation of a holy life.

It is objected, that prayer, being a direct petition, is improperly addresed to God who is an unchangeable Being.—We answer; that we have good reasons for believing in the direct and immediate operation of God upon the mind in answer to the prayer of faith and desire. This opinion is founded on the language of our Saviour on different occasions, on arguments drawn from his own prayers, and on the case of the first converts to christianity. This fact is adapted to establish a much more intimate sense of connex-

fon with and dependence on God, and answers better to his paternal character, to suppose that. when we pray, he will grant us favors than to suppose he will not. But these direct influences are undountedly given in conformity to general laws, which the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, have imposed upon himself.

It is again objected, That God has predetermined what he will do for us, and with us; his determinations are not to be changed by our prayers, therefore our prayers are useless. We answer; on this principle, *our exertions of any sort*, are equally useless. We may say, God has determined what he will do for us and with us; his will and determinaation cannot be changed; therefore any exertion on our part, the performance of any duty, or the use of any means, is idle and fruitless. It would be folly to use any means to obtain the necessary comforts of life, or to preserve life itself, on this principle.

Again it is objected, God is infinitely wise and good, and knows better what we need than we do ourselves; that without our solicitation his benevolence inclines him to confer on us all real benefits; therefore there is no use in our prayers.

We answer; This reasoning may be extended equally to all actions. We may say, God knows far better than we do, what is good for us and is disposed to confer every real good upon us; therefore it is idle for us to plan or act, or use any means whatever of obtaining what we think good. In every case in God's government, the blessings which he has enabled us to procure for ourselves by the use of certain means, he will not confer upon us without we use those means.—Therefore as prayer is a means of forming a holy character, it is folly to expect it in the neglect of this means.

The denial of the direct operations of the spirit cuts the very nerves of prayer. We have known some, who were once warmly engaged in the duty of prayer, lose the very spirit and practice of it, by speculating, & philosophising on this subject. We can conceive of no doctrine more dangerous to the souls of men, than that, which tends to check and destroy the spirit of prayer. Such a doctrine stands opposed to the spirit and practice of Jesus, our pattern—to the doctrines and example of his apostles and primitive saints, and to the experience of every living christian. Prayer is the means by which we receive the grace of God, and enjoy sweet communion with the Father and the son. Enjoying

this we have communion one with another, and grow up into Christ our living head in all things.

Some have objected to the mode of praying vocally.—Had this mode been wrong, Jesus would never have practised it. When in secret and alone he was distinctly heard to pray at the distance of a stone's cast which might be a hundred yards. Weightier objections have been made to many persons praying at the same time, in the same assembly with an audible voice. Though this might suggest the idea of confusion in the minds of those, who may not have witnessed what we have in this country; yet there are seasons when this mode has been practised without any apparent disorder. In the great revival of religion in Kentucky more than twenty years ago, it was common in the great congregation to hear many poor convicted sinners in different parts crying and pleading for mercy, and entreating their friends around them to pray for them. In whatever direction you passed through the crowd, some one would be found around the distressed, helping with his prayers. This was confusion to none but the prayerless, many of whom felt so wretched and restless, that they also were constrained to cry for mercy.

We have heard many praying audibly at the same time and place, when indeed the exercise appeared to exhibit confusion. They prayed without the spirit of prayer, and when there was no apparent necessity for it. This we have never seen blessed of God. It was only the form of that which we have described as practised in the revival. There are many who speak against this exercise of religion in a contemptuous way, not becoming the profession they make. They object to what we are not disposed to justify; but in their objection they include every case, which we think rash and unwarrantable.

For some of these thoughts we are indebted to the Christian Register. EDITOR.

REVIVALS.

Extract of a letter from Elder Joseph Banfield in the Christian Herald, Portsmouth N. H.

In this town, and Middleton, adjoining, the Lord has lately wrought a great work. About sixty, I believe, profess to

have received a pardon of their sins, and the work is still going on.

The labors of Elder Simeon Swett, and others, have been much blessed in this vicinity. Elder Swett has baptized a number. Last Sabbath I preached at Middleton to a large assembly of people, after which the ordinance of baptism was administered in the presence of the numerous concourse. Several others have offered themselves as candidates for baptism, and will probably go forward soon.

Extract of a letter from Elder Samuel Rand, to the Editor, dated Portland, June 22, 1827.

Br. Foster,—The work of God is still going on in this town. Last Lord's day I baptized twenty one, which makes just one hundred, which I have baptized since the work began, there has been over thirty more before the Church, some of them will go forward soon.—There is a large number now in distress for their souls. Other churches share largely in the glorious work. Elder Phinney has been laboring here with me as a yoke fellow; he is a faithful servant of Christ, he has also been laboring in Westbrook, and the Lord has blessed his labors there; he has baptized ten in that place, and they are considered members with the church here. The prospect is still glorious with us. Poor mourning sinners come and bow around the altar while the children of God offer up strong cries for them, and often some go away rejoicing. We never saw such a day here before.—Pray for us that the work may not cease until all shall be brought to know him from the least to the greatest. Yours in gospel fellowship.—*Christian Herald.*

The revival continues at Union Meeting House in Fayette County Ky. Christians are much engaged, and sinners are turning to the Lord.

At our monthly meeting in Georgetown the 4th Lord's day of June, it pleased God to visit us in mercy. Several were awakened, and came forward from the crowd to join us in prayer. We religiously celebrated the 4th of July. This day will be held in everlasting remembrance by many who attended. It was truly a day of solemnity.—Many were weeping, and many resolved on that day to follow the Lord. Some experienced the consolation of the gospel, and in a few days after were baptized into the name

of Jesus Christ. Since that time the work is increasing, and many are daily professing religion and joining the different churches in this place. We have feared that the spirit of partyism may retard and ultimately check the good work. This evil, deplored by the pious of every name, has, since our recollection, been the cause of crushing every revival in the world. May God revive the pure religion of heaven, which consists in peace, love and union! We shall in subsequent numbers give the particulars of this revival.

From the Baptist Recorder for Aug. 4th, we learn that there has been a great revival of religion in some parts of Virginia. Since last October 273 have been added to the Baptist churches in Richmond, 175 to the Methodist church, and 100 to the Presbyterian church; all in the same city, and during the same revival.—10 miles north of the city 60 more have been baptized. In Hanover and Caroline counties between 2 & 300 have been baptized by Elder Barlow. Ten miles below Richmond 20 more have been recently baptized. In Portsmouth, Norfolk, Williamsburg, Isle of Wight, York, Surry, and the adjacent counties, there is an unusual excitement. The number of converts has increased to more than 200 in Norfolk.

In Guilford Me. nearly 100 have been baptized since January last.

PARTYISM.

Of all the evils to be deplored in the religious world, partyism stands pre-eminent. It is believed to this cause may be traced the termination of every revival and reformation in the world. We are confident of the truth of this fact as far as our own knowledge extends. What but this terminated the revival of religion in Kentucky and the West, twenty five years ago? Then were living christians happily united; their distinctions and notions were almost lost in the glory of religion. It was evidently seen that if this state of things continued all parties must sink into oblivion, human Creeds be neglected, and all christians would flow together into one body. Party spirits trembled at this; for such spirits are always more solicitous to strengthen their party than to convert souls to the Lord—they are more zealous to maintain their peculiar notions and creeds than to support and defend the simple doctrine of the Bible.

These fearing the downfall of their party, and in the pride of their hearts, wishing to increase it, began the horrid work of drawing disciples after them, and of dividing the flock of Christ, that *they might glory in their flesh.* The alarm spread, and every party spirit was crying *O Israel to your tents.* Now peace, love and union the religion of heaven, were lost in the din of controversy, strife and war.—Now families and neighbors, before happily united were divided, and separated by party walls, from communion with each other. By continually hearing from the pulpit each party anathematising one another, they become suspicious of each other, and manifested a distance and indifference, incompatible with the christian profession. Thus terminated that glorious revival, which had caused the earth to quake for fear, and multitudes to turn to the Lord.

Two numbers more will complete the first volume of the "CHRISTIAN MESSENGER." Should any of the subscribers wish to discontinue their subscriptions at the close of the year, they will please give information to the Editor, thro' the Post Masters or his Agents, against the 25th of September. If not given by that time, they will be considered as subscribers for the second volume. The terms are the same. It is hoped that agents for the work will endeavor to increase their list of subscribers. Every attention shall be given to render the work interesting. The Editor is sorry that by negligence of Postmasters, or want of correct information on his part, as to the residence of some of his subscribers, some numbers of the Messenger have been lost.—As far as he could, he has supplied the deficiency.

COMMUNICATED.

On Aug. 2, 1827, the first conference of the Elders and Brethren of the Christian Church in the Eastern District of Indiana, met at Pleasant Meeting House, on Indian Kentucky.

The Elders present were, Jesse Hughes, Beverly Vawter, Jesse Frazier, Daniel Roberts, Henry Logan, and Joseph Shannon. J. W. Mavity, unordained preacher.

Agreed that our next Conference be at bro. Frederick Steemberger's Bartholomew county, near Edingburgh. We wish the Churches in our connexion to send letters and messengers to that Conference.

JESSE HUGHES, *Pres't.*

B. VAWTER, *Cl'k.*

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—PAUL.

VOL. I] GEORGETOWN, KY. SEPT 25, 1827. [No. 11

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—NO. VIII.

We have been thus particular in giving our views of the gospel, which we preached prior to separation from the Presbyterians, that the world might be able to form a correct judgment respecting our course. After we had stated our views of the gospel, we next proceeded at the request of Synod, to state our objections to their confession of faith. We deem it unnecessary to notice particularly those objections which we made and published in our apology; for by attending to our views of the gospel, any one may at once see their discrepancy with the confession of faith. We objected to all the rigid doctrines of Calvin, contained in the confession. We also stated our objections to all human, authoritative confessions; as being separating walls between christians from their first introduction to the present time.—We determined therefore in order to promote christian union, to cast all such books *to the moles and bats*, and to take the Bible alone as the only standard of faith, practice and discipline. This was then considered a daring and dangerous step indeed. For this we were ranked among the atheistical Illumineers of Germany, and derided, reproached and persecuted as the enemies of God and man. The pulpits were disgraced with invective, and the presses groaned under the weight of opposition to us.

In the mean time we were earnestly and successfully engaged in preaching the gospel, and churches were multiplied. We ordained to the ministry David Purviance, who had long served his country as a legislator. His labors were then, and still are, a blessing to the church. We listened to objections made against us by enemies as well as friends, and determined to correct our errors, and receive truth by every means. While we were denouncing partyism and urging christians to union, it was frequently cast up to us

that we were as much a party as others, having assumed a party name, *the Springfield presbytery*. We felt the force of the objection, and determined to free ourselves from this cause of offence. We therefore met in Bourbon County Ky. June 28th, 1804, and agreed to cast off our assumed name, and power, and to sink into the general body of christians, taking no other name than *christians*, the name first given by divine authority to the disciples of Christ. This we announced to the world in a small piece, entitled "*the last will and testament of Springfield Presbytery.*"

The *manner* in which this piece was written, we confess, did not then meet with our entire approbation, but the matter of it we see no good reason yet to reject. As it has been the cause of much declamation and censure, we have determined to present to the public the substance of it.

1. In the first place, we agreed that as a party and legislative body, the Springfield Presbytery be dissolved, and sink into union with the body of Christ at large: *for there is but one body, and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.*

2. We relinquished the power of making laws for the government of the church, and of executing them by delegated authority; that the people might have free course to the Bible and adopt *the law of the spirit of the life in Christ Jesus.*

4. We advised candidates for the gospel ministry to study the holy scriptures with fervent prayer, and to obtain license from God to preach the simple gospel without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or rudiments of the world; and *that none take this honor to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron.*

5 & 6. We yielded to the church her right of government, and to try her own candidates for the ministry, to choose her own preacher, and support him by a free will offering; admit members; remove offences, and never henceforth to delegate her right of government to any man, or set of men whatever.

7. We recommended to the people the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven.

We then gave our reasons for dissolving as follows; "With deep concern they viewed the divisions, and party spirit, which have long existed among professing christians; principally owing to the adoption of human creeds and forms of

government. While they were united under the name of a presbytery, they endeavored to cultivate a spirit of love and unity with all christians; but found it extremely difficult to suppress the idea, that they themselves were a party separate from others. This difficulty increased in proportion to their success in the ministry. Jealousies were excited in the minds of other denominations; and a temptation was laid before those, who were connected with them, to view them in the same light.—As they proceeded in the investigation of church government, they soon found that there was neither precept, nor example in the New Testament for such confederacies as modern church sessions, presbyteries, Synods, general Assemblies &c. Hence they concluded, that while they continued in the connexion in which they then stood, they were off the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, of which Christ himself is the chief corner stone.—Therefore from a principle of love to christians of every name, the precious cause of Jesus, and to dying sinners, who are kept off from the Lord by the existence of sects and parties in the church, they have cheerfully consented to retire from the din and fury of conflicting parties and to sink out of the view of fleshly minds, and die the death—yet they will preach, and aid the brethren by their counsls, when required, assist in ordaining elders or pastors, seek the divine blessings, unite with all christians, commune together, and strengthen each others hands in the work of the Lord."

This piece when published increased ten fold the opposition against us. The artillery of every party was directed against us. They evidently saw if we prevailed all parties must be dissolved. They represented us as disorganizers, having no form of government, and aiming a destructive blow at all church government. Why these charges against us? Because we took the Bible as the only rule given to the church by the only law giver, who solemnly enjoined upon all to walk according to this *same rule.* The Bible alone was considered as an insufficient rule, as *no government*, by many of our opposers; and to hold up this as the standard of heaven, to which all parties should come into one body, was thought to be disorganizing, and destructive to all church government!

In the year 1804, the General Assembly of presbyterians sent a committee to endeavor to reconcile, and settle the difference between us and the Synods. We attended the

call of the committee with the Synod at Danville Oct. 1804. The committee proposed to us a few queries which we answered as follows:

Question 1. By the committee. "What were your reasons for renouncing the jurisdiction of the presbyterian church?"

Answer. 1. "Because we believed that those bodies, with which we stood connected, acted contrary to their own rules."

2. Because the confession of faith or standard of that church, contained several things which we viewed as contrary to the word of God, on which account we could not retain it as the standard of our faith, or submit to be judged, and condemned by its dictates. This we saw evidently to be the design of Synod. Other reasons and the train of circumstances, which in a gradual chain brought the matter to that issue, are fully exhibited in our apology to which we refer all who want information. While we were let alone, we were willing to let the confession of faith alone; but as soon as we found our sentiments were to be brought to that standard, we renounced its authority, and consequently had no alternative but to withdraw."

"Question 2. By the committee of the general Assembly. Can any method of accommodation be proposed, which may induce you to return to the jurisdiction of that church, and heal the divisionwhich has taken place in the Synod of Kentucky?"

Answer. "To the first part of this question we answer in the negative, so long as they retain the confession of faith as the standard of doctrine and discipline, because we cannot receive that book as our standard. When we at first withdrew, we felt ourselves freed from all creeds but the Bible, and since that time by constant application to it, we are led farther from the idea of adopting creeds and confessions as standards, than we were at first; consequently, to come under the jurisdiction of that church now, is entirely out of the question."

"We feel ourselves citizens of the world, God our common Father, all men our brethren by nature, and all christians our brethren in Christ. This principle of universal love to christians, gains ground in our hearts in proportion as we get clear of particular attachments to a party. We therefore cannot put ourselves into a situation which would check the

growth of so benign a temper, and make us fight under a party standard.

"Notwithstanding we conceive we can propose a method of accommodation, which, with the divine blessing, will heal the division, which subsists between both the ministers and people throughout the bounds of the Synod of Kentucky, as follows:

1. "Let us remember that all christians are one in Christ, members of his body, partakers of his nature and heirs of the kingdom: Therefore they have no power over one another to cut off, exclude, or unite.

2. "Let us pray for more of the uniting, cementing spirit.

3. Treat differences in lesser matters with christian charity and mutual forbearance, and bend our united force in the common cause.

4. Give up the care of the church to God by constant fervent prayer—counsel, advise, admonish, reprove, comfort and strengthen one another as necessity may require, in the spirit of love and meekness. Then will be accomplished that saying, *that of the rest durst no man join himself to them.*"

"Rob't. Marshall,
John Dunlavy,
Barton W. Stone,
John Thompson."

Danville, Oct. 18, 1804.

No accommodation or reconciliation could be effected by the committee, between the Synod and us. The business was therefore indefinitely postponed, and we returned to our respective homes.

Three valuable Elders, who had a few years before separated with James O'Kelly from the Methodist connexion, about this time united with us. Their names were Clement Nance, James Read and Rice Haggard, the latter of whom soon after published a pamphlet on the name *Christian*, proving that by this name alone every member of Christs body should be called.

We were sorely pressed with the weight of another argument or objection to the doctrine we then preached. We believed and preached that the sufferings of Christ were vicarious, or in the room and stead of sinners, in order to pay their debts or to satisfy law and justice in their stead—we also preached that Christ died for all, or tasted death for

every creature. If he died for all, and the design of his death was to satisfy the penal demands of law and justice in the room of sinners, then it appeared that all must be saved. On this view of the sufferings of Christ, we evidently saw Calvinism or Universalism was true; neither of which we could receive as the doctrine of the Bible. To the Bible we then applied with prayerful attention to find the truth on this point. We soon found that the sufferings of Christ were no where said in the Bible to be designed to reconcile God to sinners; but on the contrary, "that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself."—We soon found that the word *atonement*, was but once named in the New Testament, Rom. 5, 10.; and in this text it could not mean *satisfaction* to the demands of law and justice, because it states "by whom *we have now received the atonement*," and not that God received it. We evidently saw that the word should have been translated, *reconciliation*, as all the learned agree. We diligently sought for the doctrine of satisfaction to law and justice by the death of Christ. We could not find in the Bible, nor could we find a man who could shew it there. We then enquired what were the demands of law and justice against the sinner, accordingly to the popular systems of the day. We learned that the law required perfect, personal and perpetual obedience—that justice required of the transgressor death temporal, spiritual and eternal, that Christ as surety paid this debt of obedience and suffering in the stead of the sinner, which obedience active and passive, is imputed to the sinner for justification.

We admitted the claims of law and justice to be correct; but our enquiry was, did Christ as surety satisfy these claims, or pay these debts for the sinner, in his stead?—Did he in the sinner's stead, pay the debt of obedience to law, that is, love God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, and his neighbor as himself? If so, we evidently saw that the sinner was freed from obligations to love God or his neighbor, seeing the surety had paid this debt of obedience for him. This we durst not admit. Nor could we learn how Christ could fulfil these demands for another; for admitting he was both God and man, we plainly saw that *as God* he must love himself infinitely; and *as man* he must love his neighbor as himself. We could see no surplus righteousness for another. The doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ to the sinner for justification, we

found not in the Bible; though this doctrine is a prominent feature in the system so generally esteemed as orthodox, yet the expression, *the imputed righteousness of Christ*, is not once named in the Bible. We therefore gave up the doctrine as a human device.

We next inquired, did Christ pay in the sinner's stead, the debt due to justice, and so satisfied justice? Did he pay the debt of temporal death? If he did pay this debt *fully*, why do sinners of every age die, or pay the debt again?—Can it be just to demand and receive the payment twice?—Did he pay the debt of spiritual death for the sinner? Impossible; for spiritual death is to be dead to God and divine things, to have no love nor delight in God nor his ways.—Could Christ have suffered this death without being a real sinner, and guilty? Could a holy God or a holy law demand such an unholy debt? Could they demand sin as a punishment for sin? But should we contrary to truth, say that Christ has fully paid this debt of spiritual death for sinners, do they not still suffer it? Can this be just? Did he pay fully the debt of eternal death in the sinner's stead? Eternal death he never suffered, for he arose from the dead the third day, and now *liveth forevermore*. To say he fully paid the debt of eternal death, is a pointed contradiction—for the debt of eternal death will require an eternity to pay it—it can never be fully paid.

We had long before seen this hole in the system, but had filled it with a patch of human wisdom, which was this, that Christ suffered an infinite punishment which was equivalent to an eternal death. We admitted that God was *without passions*, and could not suffer; and as none but an infinite being could suffer infinitely, therefore Christ neither as God nor man could suffer this penalty. But we had been taught that the divinity was the altar on which the humanity was offered, and which gave efficacy to the sufferings of Christ. We immediately concluded that the altar did not suffer, but the human nature only—and therefore the human nature could not suffer infinitely.

For the want of Bible evidence we were compelled to give up these doctrines as the mere notions of men. This system of atonement we fearlessly affirmed was not to be found in the Bible. What is the truth on this point was one great pursuit. We enquired before for what purpose did Christ die?

UNIVERSALISM—No. III.

CONTINUED.

1. In the first place then, upon the plan we are opposing, we ask, what incentives are there in all the gospel of God to holy living? We are constrained to answer none: The declaration "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," will avail as much to our salvation, as Paul's direction to the Jailor; "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." For the Preacher taught that our conduct has no relation to eternity—has no bearing upon our future destiny. The sinner therefore who spends his days in opposition to holiness, is running as directly, and as speedily to heaven as the best christain! Nay, more: a Voltaire, whose motto was, "Crash the Wretch," a Paine, a Gibbon, a Hume, whose mighty energies, were all exerted to crush the Son of God. and his holy religion, these are now participating in the joys of heaven, and are singing the songs of redemption through that blood which they counted an unholy thing, and trampled under their unhallowed feet!!! Should I, after teaching a sinner this doctrine, exhort him to forsake his sins, and live a holy life, he might reply: What do you mean sir; you exhort me to forsake sin, and yet teach me that sin is necessary to prepare me to enjoy happiness; nay, that in the view of the Almighty there is no sin nor evil in the world;—that "whatever is, is right." Therefore, all the lying, swearing, gambling, stealing, robbing, murdering, and all that long catalogue of crimes (falsely so called, by your hypothesis,) are necessary as forming an important part, in the grand scheme of the Almighty, to save the world. As sin, therefore, is necessary to my salvation, you had better exhort me to be more wicked, that I may be the better prepared to relish the joys of heaven!!!

Now I ask, would not this be a rational reply? Assuredly it would. The doctrine in question therefore, affords no incentives to holiness; but it affords strong motives to vice.

2. In the second place. If the doctrine we are opposing be true, how are we to view the conduct of the Apostles? They suffered the loss of all things, for Christ; they were destitute, tormented, and afflicted—they had no place like their master to lay their heads—and finally, after living a life of poverty, of disgrace, of persecution and wretchness they sealed their testimony with their blood. But if the doctrine in question be true, how shall we clear the Apos-

lies of the charge of pursuing a most foolish and inconsistent course. For, believing the doctrine of our Preacher, they must have known that all their preaching and suffering for Christ's sake, could not benefit them one jot in the life to come, and it is certain that it greatly injured them, as to the blessings of this life, for they lost them all, and forfeited even their lives.

How should we view the conduct of a man, who would engage in a most hazardous enterprize, in which he knew, that he would have to suffer the greatest hardships that human nature could bear, under the influence of the certain knowledge, that when his object was accomplished, he should be no better off, than if he never had engaged in the enterprize? We would say, that man has labored in vain; he has acted the part of a crazy man, to have labored, and suffered so much, when he knew it was all in vain. Well, just in this light are we to view the conduct of the Aposties, upon the principle we are opposing. For, under the influence of the faith, that all they did, could have no bearing upon their future destiny, (for as the secrets of the divine will were made known to them, if the sentiment of our Preacher be true they must have known it, unless the universalists will say that they have obtained a new revelation upon this subject,) they suffered the loss of all things. But poor men! they had no such an instructer as our Preacher! For, if they had, and could have believed him, they never would have acted the part they did.

They certainly would have reasoned thus: "As all the evil in the world is good in the view of the Almighty—as nothing we can do, can influence the future condition of mankind, in eternity—and as our prea hing will greatly augment our afflictions and sufferings, as well as those of all our converts—we will therefore sink into obscurity, and forgetfulness, and pass our days in quietness and ease, rejoicing in the belief, that ourselves, and all those whom we might convert to our faith will much more easily, and full as certainly get to heaven without our exertions as with them!!

3. In the third place, if there be no future punishment, then the Antedeluvians, who were swept from the earth for their wickedness, were immediately conducted to heaven, andwere far more happy and blessed, than good old Noah, who, for his righteousness was kept in this world (which our

Preacher explained to be hell,) of sin and misery for several centuries after!!! The wickedness of the Antedeluvians therefore was their pasport to heaven, while poor old Noah's righteousness, kept him in hell for centuries after they were conducted to heaven!! And so we may say of all the wicked Israelites, who were cut off by the immediate judgment of God, for their sins—and of all the nations of the earth, who were cut off by the Israelites, by the direction of God, for their sins. They were at once introduced into the unspeakable joys of heaven, while the poor Israelites, who were preserved, and for whose benefit these people were exterminated, were left to toil through the difficulties, and sorrows of life.

Again, admit the principle of our Preacher, that there is no future punishment. "*Then* the murderers of the Lord of life and glory, and the millions of their stiffnecked and impious countrymen, who fell in the unparalleled slaughter of the siege and sacking of Jerusalem, *went to heaven* the moment they expired, and were incalculably more blessed, than the holy and humble Disciples of our once crucified, but now ascended and glorified Redeemer, who were alive to wrestle with pagan persecution, and Jewish malice, and hunger, and nakedness, and torture, and anguish, and principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, until their christian warfare was accomplished; *Then*, Judas, who betrayed his *master* with a kiss, and added the sin of self-murder, to the crime of treason, *went to heaven*, (instead of *his own* place,) the moment that he hanged himself, and that his bowels had gushed out, and became far happier than the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who was left to encounter stripes and stoning, and shipwreck, and perils of water, and robbers, and his countrymen, and the heathen, and in the city, and in the wilderness, and in the sea, and among false bethren, and weariness, and painfulness, and watchfulness, and hunger and thirst, and fastings, and cold, and nakedness; *Then* profane and profligate *soldiers*, who march warm and weary to the battlefield, where the shrill neighing of the steeds, and the sound of the trumpet, and the clashing of arms, and the roaring of artillery, and the floating of blood-red banners upon the wings of the wind, and proclaim the feast, and the revelry, and the triumph of death to be near at hand, *wing their way to heaven* the moment they breathe out their mortal life and their own curses, and execrations

and blasphemies agaisnt the most high God, and immediately receive a portion vastly superior to that of the faithful followers of the Lamb, who are left to conflict, with trial, with trouble, and penury, and privation, and pain, and disappointment, and disaster, and disease, and suffering, and scorn, and sorrow, and destitution." (Christian Advocate, Vol. I—No. 21.)

In the fourth and last place, if the doctrine of our Preacher be true, *then has Christ died in vain.* For if all the evil in the world is good in the view of the Almighty, and necessary to the consumation of the happiness of man, and his own glorious purposes of mercy to him, then it would seem useless, nay, it would seem cruel in the Almighty to have sent his son to put away sin, to destroy evil, which is the very life, and salvation of the world! for without it, we never could be happy. It would seem to me, upon this plan, to have been more consistent with the goodness of God, to have sent his son, to teach the world to be more wicked, that they might be the better prepared to relish the bliss of heaven!! Christian reader, can you receive such a system of contradiction? A system which pleads for sin, nay, which makes it the very saviour of the world—which would make the word of God of none effect—and tare from the cross of Christ, (the only hope of man) all its divine glory? No, no, no! Your heart responds with mine. I am determined only to glory in the cross of my Lord, by which I am crucified to the world and the world to me.

TIMOTHY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Sir:

As variety is agreeable to the human mind, perhaps your readers may find some amusement and instruction in the following, should you think it worthy of a page in the Christian Messenger, and give it publicity.

The present conflict between the Bible and party creeds and confessions, or in other words, the war between the church and the clergy, is perfectly analagous to the revolutionary war between Britain and America; liberty was contended for on the one side, and dominion and power on the other. It is a well known fact that our freedom from under the despotic government of Great Britain was obtained by a long and bloody conflict, though but few are now alive

who witnessed the tragic scene. I well remember the time and place, when and where American blood first crimsoned the ground in that evermemorable contest. A few began that struggle, which terminated in the complete freedom of the United States.

Long has Bible government been discarded; and long have creeds, confessions, and disciplines been established as tests of orthodoxy by ecclesiastical despotism—long have they, who taught the doctrines of the New Testament without the gloss of human wisdom, been spurned as heretics, anathematized, cast out of the synagogue, and treated as infidels, unless they would recant, come again under the yoke, and *teach for doctrines the commandments of men*, or such doctrines as are not clearly revealed in the Bible. Amidst these discouraging circumstances a few faithful ministers of the New Testament were found, who dared to oppose these human authorities, and chose to follow the light of the gospel, beaming from the book of God. Regardless of consequences, they made a firm and bold stand against the overwhelming flood of opposition, and in defiance of clerical authority and sectarian pride erected the banner of Emanuel. A few followed the standard, and a congregation was constituted on primiture principles, having no creed but the Bible, and no name but *christian*, first given by divine authority to the disciples at Antioch. This, as in the war with Britain, commenced with few, who could hope for assistance from that power only, which, by a few fisherman, first established the church, though opposed by civil and ecclesiastical powers combined.

This stand, made by a few in a back country, soon produced a serious alarm among sectarian bigots. Bible government alone threatened the eternal destruction of sectarian creeds, and names, and the boasted authority of the clergy. To avert this impending ruin, all the sectarian tribes are united in their exertions from the pulpit and the press; and have levelled their artillery at the restoration of Bible government to the church of Christ. The armies have taken the field, and the battle is begun. The conflict may be sharp and long (as in the war with Britain) yet the final issue cannot be uncertain. By the perseverance of a few, a revolution more glorious will be effected for the church of God. I am yet a living witness of the first revolution from British tyranny, which astonished the world,

and taking all things into consideration, I have no doubt, nay, I am as confident of the issue of the present contest as if it were now complete. Jesus will reign Head and King in Zion, his government shall be re-established in his church, and all who have usurped his authority, or invaded his prerogative, will be hurled from their lofty seats, and the humble christian exalted in that day.

Go on, dear brethren, persevere in the good work of the Lord, and the victory will be certain, and the reward sure. I have lately read with full approbation a remark in the Christian Baptist: "The great zeal manifested for the party *shibboleth*, and the little concern for the good works of christians, have almost defaced the land marks, which bound the plantations of nature and grace. The decent moralist without, and the precise professor within the pale of christian society, in the main, is one and the same character."—Dear brethren, while you are zealously engaged in establishing Bible government in the church of Christ, neglect not to inculcate Bible religion on the professors; which is *charity out of a pure heart*. Faith without works is dead being alone; works as well as faith are required to constitute a christian. T——— S———

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

JOHN VI. 37—40. "*All that the Father*," &c.

On this passage various and discordant opinions have been formed, which have been the subjects of endless controversy. Some have concluded from this the certain salvation of the whole world, because the heathen are given to Christ for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Others rejecting this, have concluded that those given to Christ are a certain, definite number of the fallen family, elected from eternity and given to him to be redeemed in time. Waiving the various opinions of men we shall endeavor to give the true sense of the passage from the connexion.

There is a certain character of the human family that comes to Jesus. This character is variously described, as in connexion with this passage; verse 44, it is described as one that the Father draws to Jesus—"No man can come unto me except the Father who sent me, *draw him*." In the verse following, it is described as one that has both heard & learned of the Father. "He therefore that hath heard and

learned of the Father, cometh to me." In the passage under consideration, it is described as one that is given by the Father to the son. "All that the father giveth me shall come to me." Should it be asked, who cometh to Jesus? We answer, every one that hath heard and learned of the Father; for he having received his divine instruction from the Father, is drawn by the force of truth to Jesus, to believe in him and to trust in him—he being now drawn by truth to believe in Jesus, the Father gives this poor believing soul to Jesus, that he may save him from his sins and raise him up at the last day to immortality and eternal life.

This exposition is in perfect accordance with the divine history of facts, with the whole tenor of revelation and with christian experience. These positions we shall endeavor to establish.

1. It is written in the prophets, "They shall all be taught of God."—verse 45, God's instructions are for all, that all may be profited by them.

2. God has taught formerly by his prophets, and in these last days by his Son. Heb. i. 1, 3.—"God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son." God taught the people by the prophets, that Messiah should come in the latter days to save his people—that he should be born of a virgin in Bethlehem of Judea, of the seed of David according to the flesh. He taught also by his prophet Daniel the time of his coming—he taught the wonders he should perform in life—that he should die, rise again from the dead the third day, and ascend again to heaven. In short, God, by his prophets, had given in prophecy so complete a history of the Messiah, that it is a wonder that at his appearance he was not known and welcomed by all as the Son of God, and Saviour of the world. The reason is plain. The Rabbies and Elders had made void the word of God by their traditions. They taught the people that when Messiah should appear, he would come in the pomp and splendor of an eastern Monarch that he would literally fill the throne of David, and sway the sceptre over the world. The people believing the Elders, would never believe in Jesus, nor come to him as the great Deliverer and Saviour; but the fact proves that all who had heard and learned of the Father, as he taught by

the prophets, did believe that he was the Christ; and were drawn to him for salvation.

God in these last days has taught the people more fully by his Son. *My doctrine*, said Jesus, *is not mine but the Fathers who sent me, who gave me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak.* The very works too by which his Messiahship was proved he ascribes to the Father. "It is not I that speak, but the Father in me he doeth the works." When any therefore heard the doctrine preached by Jesus, and saw the works performed by him, and by these means were led to believe in him, they were drawn to him by the Father and given to him; we may suppose the Father thus to address the Son; My Son I have sent thee to be the Saviour of the world—Here is a poor sinner that believes in thee, he comes to thee for salvation, I have drawn him to thee by giving him evidence to believe that thou art the Christ, able and willing to save him, I now give him to thee to be saved and led through the temptations of the world, and through death to my eternal kingdom in heaven. It is my will that he be not lost, but raised up at the last day to inherit eternal life.

Now says the Son, *all that the Father Giveth to me, shall come to me.* Shall come to me, in despite of all the powers of darkness—and frowns, threats and persecution of the world.—*And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* O what grace! What encouragement to poor sinners! *Him* is a personal pronoun, and includes, in this text, all characters—whether good or bad, old or young, rich or poor, bond or free—*Him*, however vile, old, wretched and depraved, that cometh to me for salvation, I will in no wise cast out.—Nothing, no consideration whatever shall induce me to cast him out. Though he be as poor and loathsome as Lazarus; not like the rich man will I cast him out of my house of mercy, and expose him to the dunghill with the dogs, which are without. Though he be defiled with sin beyond human endurance, as were the publicans and sinners, who were not permitted to mingle with decent and respectable society; yet not like them will I cast *him* out. Though he is as filthy and polluted as the very scum of creation, the harlots, a name at which modesty blushes, and who are banished from all civil society; yet him I will kindly receive and save. Though he come crimsoned with the blood of my saints, slain in the fury of heart, as Saul of Tarsus; though he come stained with

my own blood, shed with hellish spite, as did his murderers the Jews; yet I will not cast *him* out. Though he may have spent his life in rapine and murder, and now for his crimes justly suffering the sentence of death; yet when trembling on the eve of time, and just ready to drop into intermipable woe, if he come to me, as did the dying thief, I will in no wise cast him out. Merciful Jesus! who need despair, that comes to thee? That comes to thee in the day of visitation—in the day of mercy? "Behold! *now* is the accepted time; Behold! *now* is the day of salvation."

"For I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." This is adduced by the Saviour as a reason, why he will cast out none that comes to him. As if he had said: Some of you may suppose that your wicked conduct towards me and my cause may have so rivetted my indignation and opposition to you, that were you to sue for mercy at my court I would reject you. Do not thus think, For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. This is paramount with me to every other consideration. "Not my will but thine be done, O God."

The will of God is expressed in the two following verses; "And this is the Father's will that sent me, that of all he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day." This undoubtedly refers to the resurrection of the just. But the resurrection of the unjust is by no means excluded; for it is also the will of God, "that all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation."

V. 40: "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."—This is another *item* of the will of God. *Every one*—including every character—who seeth the Son, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and believeth on him as the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, shall have everlasting life, including immortality, and all the blessings of heaven. O let every thing that has breath praise the Lord!

EDITOR.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Minutes of the Christian Conference in the North of Kentucky, held at the Republican meeting house Fayette county, on the 31st. of August, 1827.

Brother THOMAS SMITH was appointed Moderator, and THOMAS M. ALLEN appointed clerk. The following Elders in addition to the moderator and clerk were present, viz:—Francis R. Palmer, William Morrow jr., John Longly, Leonard J. Fleming, Marquis P. Wills, Michael Rice and Harrison G. Osborne—John G. Ellis, Wm. Reid and Samuel Ellis, unordained preachers.

Elder John Jones of the South East Conference of this state was also present, bearing a corresponding letter from his conference to this:—

Letters and communications from the following churches were then presented and read.

From Republican, *Fayette County*; Cave Spring, *Jessamine*; Georgetown, *Scott*; Kentontown, *Harrison*; Cynthiana, *Harrison*; Indian Creek, *Harrison*; Round top meeting house, *Madison*; Bethel, *Fayette*; Union, *Fayette*; Antioch, *Bourbon*; Near New Castle, *Henry;* Beaver Creek, *Harrison;* Mount Pleasant, *Franklin;* Mud meeting house, *Mercer.*

The churches at Cynthiana & Antioch having been constituted since our conference in April last, were by request received into fellowship.

By request of the church at Round top meeting house, Brother Wm. Reid, was ordained to the ministry of the Gospel and its ordinances.

Brother John Longly stated; that by the request of the last conference, he had visited the church at Cabin Creek, and in conjunction with other Elders had ordained brother Peter Cox to the ministry of the Gospel and its ordinances.

Agreed, That we recommend to the different churches to make their own arrangements and appointments for Communions, without making application to Conference.

Brother John G. Ellis was received and encouraged to exercise and improve his gift.

The Moderater and Clerk were appointed to write a corresponding letter to the S. E. Conference.

Brother John G. Ellis and John Longly were appointed to write and bear a letter to the Miami Conference, in Ohio.

It being stated that Brother Francis R. Palmer expected

soon to set out on a long southern journey; it was unanimously agreed to give him a letter of commendation, recommending him to all the lovers of Jesus, as one eminently useful as a gospel minister.

Agreed, That the Editor of the *Christian Messenger*, be requested to publish the above in his work.

Agreed, That our next annual meeting be held at Antioch Bourbon County, on Friday before the 3d, Lord's Day of September, 1828.

THOMAS SMITH, *Mod'r.*

THOS. M. ALLEN, *Sec'ry.*

Brother Stone, although there was at Conference a very large collection of brethren, yet there was not communications from one third of the churches in the bounds of our Conference. Harmony and unanimity prevailed; the meeting continued until Monday; vast crowds attended to hear the word of life, which was ably dispensed among them. On Monday it was truly a solemn time; seven joined the church, and crowds of mourners, came forward weeping, and crying for mercy, asking God's people to pray for them, while the congregation seemed generally to be deeply affected; many I have no doubt will date their conviction and conversion from this meeting, which was one of the most interesting I ever attended.

The accounts from many of the churches were very interesting and cheering, and very generally encouraging; never have we had greater cause to thank the benevolent Father of mercies than at present. Amidst bitter opposition we see, and hear of God's work reviving throughout a great portion of our country. Since our last Conference in April, 37 have been added to the church at Georgetown, 7 at Indian Creek, 16 at Union, 39 at Beaver, (the addition of this church include those of the last year.) Mud meeting house 31, between 30 and 40 at the Republican, 11 at Antioch since its organizatton; and additions in many other places, the precise number not known. The cause is still progressing, and almost every week additions are making to many of the churches. May union and stedfastness prevail, and may truth and righteousness triumph. I did intend to make extracts from some of the letters from the different churches, which I am confident would be read with great pleasure, but fearing it would occupy too much room, I have omitted it—

I hope our brethren will occasionally give us, through the Messenger, an account of their success, and the progress of truth.

THOS. M. ALLEN.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN REGISTER.

THE CONCLUSION OF MR. MOTTE'S SERMON.

But I would now humbly confine your attention to the singleness of the profession indispensable to Christian Communion. He that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. The acknowledgement of his *divine authority* constitutes a Christian, as far as belief is concerned. Other points are of great, but yet of secondary importance: his miracles, prophecies, resurrection, &c. are subservient to this conviction: they prove him to be the Messiah. All who hold this, if God be true, hold the head.

Among other advantages of the simplicity of this creed, we have to thank God for being furnished in it with an easy and intelligible principle of union which might bind all Christendom together, round the globe and through all time. We know who is a brother in Christ. I ask not assent to perplexing dogmas expressed in the language of men. I inquire not whether you have studied metaphysics. I do not reservedly draw back, until I have taken the guage with my measure of the length and breadth and depth of your theological system, and weighed in my balance the results of your enquiries in what does not touch the Supreme authority of the Gospel. But, brother, believest thou in Christ, and I take you by the hand, and we are one already in what lies nearest to our hearts.

It is on this principle, that the communion table of this church is spread for all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. In this, it is known we differ from many churches; which, not satisfied with the simple creed that appears to us so conformible to scriptural and primitive usage, in addition to the belief that Jesus is the Christ, require assent to more than 300 propositions. While we pretend not to impeach their motives, and believe them conscientious, we must still think the ill effects of this are obvious, and not so obvious as certain. The morose and exclusive temper is confirmed by illiberality; and the meek and amiable spirit of Christian candour is bound by the principles of its church to needless fears for a brother whom it cannot convince, and has to en-

dure the melancholy and somewhat paradoxical pain of pitying despair, where still it pretends not to impute a crime.—Surely the world, with its selfish interests and Jealous rivalries, drives men far enough apart: why force the gentle religion of peace to come into the unholy tumult, and with sanctions which conscience dares not disavow, aggravate and multiply the hostilities of breasts already enflamed with demoniac passions? Let us at least have one subject on which all can be at peace. Let us have one interest in which we may feel that we are too deeply concerned in common not to harmonize in the pursuit. Let us have one quiet place to which we may resort without loosing the temper of the Christian; and there, throwing aside resentment, animosity and strife, kindle and cherish universal love, as the children of the same good father, travelling along the same flinty road, directing our weary footsteps to the same everlasting mansion of rest and joy.

This is what you have aimed at, my hearers, in the constitution of your society: and I congratulate you on the privileges you enjoy; privileges with which providence has blessed you without requiring the heavy price of a sudden disruption of the ties and associations which naturally endear that house of God to our hearts, to which the footsteps of our happy childhood have followed those who we first loved, and in which we have left their tombs and memorials to see them no more. Your gift is peculiar, and you will not fail to remember that, to whom much has been given, of them will proportionably much be required. I feel called upon on this occasion to trouble you with but one suggestion, which yet you may think the principles which distinguish you render peculiarly unnecessary. The churches around repel you from their fellowship. This cannot but be a greater evil to them than to you: for from it may be expected, at least in some degree, the unsocial influences that make religion unamiable. But though you are free from the first action of such feelings, you may be provoked to the unworthy and equally pernicious reaction of resentful retaliation. Be on your guard. It least becomes you to recompense evil for evil. It is particularly incumbent on you, to live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath. Trust in him who judgeth righteously, and be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Recollect, the opinions of men, however erro-

neous, however illiberal they may seem to us, are still a sacred thing, a privileged sanctuary not to be profaned by angry intrusion. Should one of us, therefore, see reason to adopt the sentiments of those who differ from us,—and it seems but fair to say the same, should one of them come over to us,—regard him with the mild aspect which becomes the consciousness of our own frailty and ignorance. His motives you cannot know. His heart is open to but one eye.—To his own Master he standeth or falleth; who art thou that judgest the servant of another? For what he does he knows he must give account before the judgement seat of God: why should men oppress him with their premature inquisitions and impatient reviling? Brethren, we have something else to do besides passing sentence on one another here: let us thank God, this invidious duty is not imposed on us.

With regard to those, from whom we lament that we are separated by opinions, which we dare not hazard our souls by relinquishing, were it not like presumption in such as I am, it would give me pleasure, to bare most willing testimony to the many and great excellencies I have found among them. Notwithstanding what I think, I am warranted by experience in terming the ungracious social influence of their system. I have experienced in them, with a frequency to which I delight to recur, the exercise of virtues such as the world cannot exceed, and of which deep Christian piety alone could be the spring. Shall we not love such Christians wherever they may be found? And shall we not look up to him who maketh his sun to raise on the evil and on the good, and practise the more difficult and more peculiarly Christian grace of charity, even to the uncharitable? Life is not long enough to be wasted in contention. While we are inflaming our hearts with the rancour of unhallowed disputation, eternity stands waiting for us;—stands waiting! do we say? It comes sweeping on nearer continually, and we silently and imperceptibly draw nigh to its inevitable solemnities. Brethren the time is short:—to our task then, to our task for heaven "as ever in our great taskmaster's eye."—It may be well for us to remember, for us who stand or fall, when worlds shall be passing away, by the judgement of the meek and lowly Jesus,—that the only spirit to which he gives his sanction is the spirit of the lamb and of the dove, the emblems of his grace. It may be well to bear in mind, that he rebuked the impetuous zeal of Peter, when he drew

his sword even in his Lord's defence; and when he would prove his fitness for the office of highest apostle in his church, he asked him not, "wilt thou fight for my name?" but gently, "Simon, son of Jonas, *lovest* thou me?" So, Christians, happy will it be for us, if we can truly give the answer of the apostle, "Lord, thou knows that I love thee;" thou knowst that I love thee and have shown my love, in loving all those of whom thus saidst, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done an act of kindness to one of the least of my brethren, you have done it unto me. Happy, thrice happy shall we be to receive this commendation from him on that day when "three words spoken in charity shall be found to avail us more than a library of controversy.—Controversy! let it be with our own hearts, with our evil propensities; against the dexterous logic of the sin that both so easily besets us; against the insidious pleas of base self-interest; against the eloquent rhetoric of impetuous passions.

Then shall we be saved, when the Lord shall have his controversy with the wicked. Then shall we be saved already; saved from the dominion of sin that worketh death, the great salvation which Jesus came to effect.

Friends, strive for this, and the peace of God be with your efforts.

REVIVALS.

Extract of a letter from Elder ISAAC N. WALTER, *of Dublin, Ohio, to the Editor, dated*

"BROWNSVILLE, PA. August 3, 1827.

Brother Stone:—I left my residence in Dublin in June, in company with Elder LONG. We have been travelling to the east, and have been blessed with reviving seasons. We tarried awhile in Smithfield, where there is a good work. About 60 had been united to the Church in that place within three months past. We proceeded thence to Alleghany county, Md. and arrived there the 8th of July. We were the first preachers of the Christian name who had ever been there. The people opened their doors for us to preach among them, and were blessed in the deed; for in a very little time we constituted a church of 33 members, who professed faith in the Lord Jesus; and about 150 were under keen conviction. May the Lord be merciful unto them!—It was concluded best, that Brother LONG should stay and

take care of them, and that I return to the west and fill the appointments already made, till I arrive at home."

Elder M. GARDNER, of Ohio writes to the Editor August 15th, 1827, that he had, during the summer, baptized about 20, and that the good cause was prospering.

Religion progresses in and near Harrodsburg Ky. At the Mud meeting house, near the town, 32 were united to the church within a few weeks past. Appearances of a great ingathering to the Lord in those regions, are good.

In Georgetown, amidst the great contest for party, the good work is advancing. *Since* the last of June, when the work first commenced with us, about 40 have been added to the Christian Church in Georgetown—about 30 to the Baptist church, and about 70 to the Methodist church. A majority of those united with the Methodists are people of color; the rest are all children with the exception of seven or eight adults. May God carry on and spread his good works to the ends of the earth!

Extract of a letter from Brother HENRY MONFORT, *to the Editor, dated*

"EATON, O. Aug. 21, 1827.

"We had our communion on last Lord's day. Those preachers who attended, had a good measure of the Holy Ghost, and the consequence was that several were brought from darkness to light, from a state of stupidity in sin, to praise God for delivering grace: others appeared to be cut to the heart, and were crying for mercy, one of whom I believe has since found peace. Many of the Saints are rejoicing in God, their Saviour, whose hearts are lifted to him in prayer for the coming of his kingdom. May the Lord send forth his light and truth, that the nations of the earth may see the glories of Emmanuel! On the 2d Lord's day of this month, the Lord's supper was administered at the meeting near New Paris, in this County. The Lord was there, and blessed his people abundantly, and several were added to the church.

My dear Brother, it has been a time of darkness and discouragement among us; but I think the Lord is beginning to

revive his work: his children begin to be encouraged, and their cries are ascending to God, and I have no doubt but that God, who is merciful and gracious beyond our limited conceptions, will hear and answer and pour out his spirit to the abolishing of all things that now hinder or impede the progress of his kingdom on earth. O how long before the time come, when love shall be the bond of union and bigotry and superstition fail to rise no more! May the Lord hasten the happy day. Amen."

We have just received a letter from brother D. Hathaway of Adams county Ohio. He gives us joyful accounts of a good work in his bounds, and on Cabin Creek in this state. He says, "I have within the last two months seen the Methodists, the united brethren and the Christians, uniting around the table of the Lord; party walls appear to be falling to the ground. May God send love and union every where!"

This is as it should be.

EDITOR.

From brother E. D. Moore of Ala. we have just received the minutes of C. Conference in that state near Florence, consisting of 14 Elders and 7 unordained preachers, together with the messengers from the churches. We are sorry we have not room in this number to present the letter entire to our readers. The accounts of the continuance of the revival there are truly cheering. Minutes at that Conference professed faith in Jesus, and 30 were baptized straightway. About 300 communed together at that meeting. In the next number we may present the whole letter with the minutes of Conference. From reading the letter we are reminded of the great revival in our country more than 20 years ago. O that the Lord would carry on his work till all shall submit to his government, and become united in one body in Christ Jesus, our Lord!

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"*Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*"—PAUL.

VOL. I.] GEORGETOWN, KY. OCT. 25, 1827. [NO. 12.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE WEST—NO. VIII.

With diligence we searched for the truth on the Doctrine of atonement; the result of our inquiries was published soon after, and are well known in the West. As this doctrine, and those of trinity and the son of God (the *orthodox* notions of which were relinquished generally by us) may be laid before our readers in our subsequent numbers, we shall omit a particular notice of them now, and proceed to the history.

About this time, or soon after the dissolution of Springfield Presbytery, Matthew Houston a popular preacher among them, united with us. The revival still progressed, and new churches were forming in Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee.—In the midst of this prosperity, some of our leading preachers began to indulge in wild, enthusiastic speculations, and hesitated not to publish them abroad. One proclaimed that the Millenium was come—another said, that christians would never die, but be made immortal by some extraordinary operation of the spirit; and plainly hinted at the denial of the resurrection of the body and of a future judgement. These things to me and others were the cause of great distress. They portended great evil, which soon came upon us from a quarter the least expected. This we shall now state.

A people, called Shakers, living in New York, hearing of the remarkable revival in the West, sent a deputation of men to reconnoitre among us. The mission consisted of Mitchum, Bates and Young, men eminently qualified to execute the purpose for which they were sent. Their appearance was grave, humble and interesting. Perfection in holiness was their theme, to attain which the people were urged to receive their testimony, and submit to their direction. As many among us were breathing after perfect holiness, they were disposed to listen to any proposition by which the

might advance to that desirable state. The bait therefore was taken by many, and many were ensnared to their ruin. Among those taken were Richard McNemar, Matthew Houston, and John Dunlavy, who became very zealous to make prosolytes to the shaker-faith, and were too successful in their attempts.

This was the first serious check to our progress; and it was humiliating in the extreme. The opposition to our course before had been so violent and ill-directed, that it rather increased, our influence in society, and inclined many to unite with us. But now the Shakers under the mask of friendship, were drawing the multitude after them and many for fear of them fled from us to the different sects for refuge. What added to our grief was, the spirit of rejoicing, manifested by many of our sectarian opposers at this event, so ruinous to the souls of many. Their conclusion was, that our doctrine was thus demonstrated to be false, because so many of its advocates had embraced Shakerism.—But this argument was soon taken from them; for many of the various sects, both preachers and people, were also ensnared, and united with them.

Those of us, who stood firmly fixed in the faith of Christ, encouraged each other, and were indefatigable in our exertions to rescue the Churches from the snare of the Shakers, and to establish them on the Gospel. The storm, so tremendous in its first appearance, soon passed over. We have thought that this distresting occurrence has eventuated in good, great good to the Christian Church; for by it we are taught to check our mind from indulgeing too freely in vain speculations, and to examine well by the Bible, every doctrine presented for our acceptance. We are also taught our entire dependence upon the great Head of the Church for all good, and that he only can keep us from falling.

We humbled ourselves under the mighty hand of God—day and night, in public and private we called upon God for his Holy Spirit to revive us and bless us once more. The Lord hearkened and heard, and poured out his Spirit upon us. Our ranks, which had been thinned by the Shaker-storm, were soon filled and the churches were multiplied. Peace, love and union increased, and abounded every where. Many who had been our opposers began to see that God was with us, and either united with us, or ceased from their opposition. A few happy years we thus enjoyed in the ser-

vice of our Lord. But tribulation yet awaited us. Some of us saw evidently another storm gathering and began to prepare to meet it.

A number of us from reading the Bible had received the conviction that immersion was the Apastolic mode of baptism, and that believers were the only proper subjects of it. The Elders and brethren met in Conference on this and other subjects of importance. It was unanimously agreed that every brother and sister should act according to their faith; that we should not judge one another for being baptized, or for not being baptized in this mode. The far greater part of the Churches submitted to be baptized by immersion, and now there is not one in 500 among us who has not been immersed. From the commencement we have avoided controversy on this subject, and directed the people to the New Testament for information on this matter. Some of our preaching brethren appeared rather uneasy and dissatisfied that their congregations were submitting to this ordinance, while they could not be convinced of its propriety; yet they said but little. Some of them began to urge the necessity of making a stand upon the truth we had already learned, and desist from farther search. It was understood that we should have some other bond beside the Bible and brotherly love; that these were insufficient to unite our growing churches, and keep them pure.—It was urged that there was already a diversity of opinion among us on the doctrines of trinity, the son of God and atonement, and therefore it was necessary that some *formulary* should be made and adopted, by which uniformity might be promoted and preserved among us. Some of us saw plainly that these were the arguments used for the introduction of every human party Creed, which has ever been imposed on the world, and therefore opposed *formularies*, from a full conviction of their injury to the cause of Christ.

At Bethel, August 8th, 1810, we met in Conference.—After some time spent in conversation, a plea of union was agreed to, and the following instrument was proposed and generally adopted. "At a general meeting of ministers of the Christian church at Bethel, in the State of Kentucky, August 8th, 1810, the brethren, taking into consideration their scattered, local situation, their increasing numbers, and the difficulties arising in the execution of their office, agreed to unite themselves together *formally*, taking the

word of God as their only rule and standard for doctrine, discipline and government, and promising subjection to each other in the Lord, have hereunto subscribed their names, according to their present standing in said connexion."

At this conference it was also proposed, and agreed to that a committee be appointed to write for publication, a piece, embracing those points of doctrine, respecting which, there was so much noise throughout the country; hoping by this to remove from the public mind those strong prepossessions against us, and to obtain some degree of communion with brethren of other denominations. The committee was appointed, consisting of R. Marshall, B. W. Stone, J. Thompson, D. Purviance and H. Andrews. The subjects on which they were instructed to write, were the trinity, the Son of God and atonement. They were to report to a general meeting at Mount Tabor on the 2d. Monday of March, 1811.

On the day appointed, a very general collection of the preachers met at Mount Tabor. The committee with leave of Conference, retired to compare their writings, promising to report next morning. The committee soon found that they disagreed among themselves on the atonement the first point on which they compared their writings. Marshall, Thompson and Andrews, having relinquished the views entertained by the Christian church generally for some years past, advocated those contained in the *orthodox* creed, with regard to this doctrine and that of trinity—Stone and Purviance had written and spoken in opposition to them. On next morning we reported our disagreement among ourselves, and could not do the business to which we had been appointed by Conference. The Conference agreed to hear what the committee had written. After we had read our several pieces, a motion was made to enter into a public debate on the doctrines but the general voice was against it, supposing that they had heard enough, and declaring that the difference of opinion need not break fellowship.

Marshall and Thompson, in failing to reform us, and bring us back with them to believe what we have long since rejected, became from this time our opposers. They wrote a book against us, and in justification of their conduct, with regard to us. It was by us considered a harmless production, beneath the talents and high respectability of the authors, and therefore scarcely noticed by us. In this book they give their reasons for leaving us. One was that they could

not reform us—that by some years experience, our church had not increased in number and holiness, as they had expected—that they had thought that the Millenium was just at hand, and that a glorious church would soon be formed, &c., but they were disappointed. We pretend not to blame our brethren for acting up to their convictions. We are not to judge another man's servant, and therefore pass no uncharitable judgement on them. We believe them to be christians, driven from some points of precious truth into errors, which must and will be relinquished by Christians of every sect not long hence. These brethren, Marshall and Thompson and F. Monfort, soon after were received into the presbyterian church; and S. Westerfield and H. Andrews, not having a classical Education, were left at the door, and joined the Methodists.

The loss of these dear brethren we greatly lamented; but we less sensibly felt it: Because our number of preachers and churches had greatly increased; and the influence of the brethren in society was greatly diminished; their weight against us was almost imperceptible. From that time we have lived in peace & harmony among ourselves—our numbers from a handful have swelled to many thousands, and many churches have doubled their numbers every year for some time past. At the present time there is a greater increase than we have ever yet known. We are yet warmly opposed and spoken against every where. We trust in the living God, and labor to be accepted of him not doubting but that on the ground we now occupy, the whole church of God on earth will ultimately settle.

From the minutes of the 13th anniversary of the Franklin Association of Baptists in August 1827, we notice the following article:

"The fruitless assualts of Elders *Thomas Smith, Barton W. Stone* and *Alexander Campbell*, upon the *Circular* of last year, create a demand for it unprecedented and surprising. Three impressions are exhausted, and still the demand increases. It carries within itself its own defence. It needs no other.—wherever it appears, the garbled extract and base misrepresentations of its enemies are perfectly harmless.

The Circular takes a distinction between Creeds formed and enforced by civil authority, and those formed by voluntary associations of Christians, and enforced by no other

sanction than exclusion from Church privileges. Mr. Campbell says, this is, "a distinction where there is no difference;" that is, to exclude from Church privileges, and to *exclude*, *imprison*, *torture*, *gibbet*, *burn*, mean the same thing; and to make a distinction here, is "to distinguish where there is no difference." Thus he insults the common sense of his readers, and proves his cause desperate. Will our Unitarian neighbors give the Circular a place in their Arian Messenger? Will Mr. Campbell give it a place in his Christian Baptist? Will they allow the circular to speak for itself?—We think *they will not*. This would give those puissant pugillists some labor."

On this article we beg leave to make a few remarks.—They state that B. W. Stone, with others had made fruitless assults upon their circular of last year. This is declared by B. W. Stone to be a mistake; for he has never seen nor read that circular, nor has he at any time assaulted it. They are pleased to call the able productions of Elders Campbell and Smith against the doctrines of that circular, "fruitless assaults." Time will disclose the fruits, which, we think, will not be very pleasant to the taste of Creed-mongers.—That man must be very unobservant, who does not see the spirit of reform mightily working in the various orders of Christians in the present day; in a little time it will break every human fetter which has long bound and enslaved the Christian world; and then will they all flow together in Christ Jesus, and become one, even as the Father and the Son are one.

We are well assured that Elder A. Campbell is fully able to cope with the author of that circular, though the association affects to think that in his former attempts "he insults the common sense of his readers, and proves his cause desperate."

The association asks a question difficult to be answered,—"Will our *unitarian* neighbors give the circular a place in their Arian Messenger? We know of no body of people in the West who call themselves *Unitarians*; nor have we ever heard of a periodical, called the Arian Messenger. We suppose the Association means by *Unitarians* the Christians; and by the *Arian Messenger*, the Christian Messenger. We are sorry to impute this illiberality to them; but their conduct too plainly evinces the fact. It is childish (and from children it is learned) to give nick-names. When I was a child, no-

thing offended me more than to be called by a nick-name; but when I become a man, I put away childish things, and have learned to pity them, who profess to be men, and yet are acting the child in this respect. Such things coming from an association of D. D's. and elders, we think, have no good tendency to exalt their wisdom nor candor in the view of the intelligent. Our lord and Master was called by the Clergy in his day, a deceiver, a melefactor, a devil. If these things were done in the green tree, what may we expect to be done in the dry? We are learning to imitate him, "who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."—

We ask not the association to call us christians, if our works contradict the profession; but if our works accord with the christians character, "woe to the man that despises one of these little ones—woe to the man by whom an offence cometh; it were better for him that a mill stone were hanged about his neck, and he drowned in the depths of the sea, than to offend one of these little ones that believe in me."

The Association know, or should know that we christians in the West have rejected the name *Unitarian*, *Arian*, and every other party name with equal abhorence. They should know, as we have proved from the press, that we have retrograded from the paths of error and mysticism, long trodden by the Christian world, and have settled permanently on the divinity of the scriptures, which, with regard to the Father and the son, was received and believed by the christians of the first centuries. From this divinity Arius departed and we think with him the generality of the existing sects in the present day, have far, very far wandered.

Should the Association, among whose minutes we have found the atticle already quoted, or should any distinguished members or member of that association, in a christian style request us to publish their circular of last year, and should they send it directed to the editor of the Christian Messenger, we will give it a place in our work, provided it be not too lengthy. EDITOR.

QUERIES ANSWERED.

We have examined the queries of the "Enquiring stranger," proposed in our 10th number, and do not think them difficult to be answered.

Q. 1. Is there a gospel church now existing in the world? If there be, where is she?

A. Yes; there is a gospel church now existing, has existed, and will exist to the end of time. For said Jesus "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail agasnst it." Daniel prophesied respecting this kingdom or church, that "In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed—it shall stand forever." Dan. ii, 44. The scriptures being true, a gospel church does exist. "Where is she?"

A. "In the wilderness." Rev. xii, 6.

Q. 2. Are the present divisions and subdivisions of all the professed christians in the world, the wilderness into which the woman fled &c.

A. We think so; for the woman or church of Christ, when she shall came up out of the wilderness, is represented as being in Babylon; for saith the voice from Heaven "come out of her (Babylon) my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues." Rev. xviii, 4.—Now Babylon signifies confusion, and O what a wilderness of confusion are the many divisions and subdivisions of the christian professors in the world! how confused their language! they cannot understand each other! they cannot build together! Yet in this wilderness—in this Babel of confusion, is the true church of Christ, concealed and protected from the furious rage of the Dragon. Humble, obedient believers are found in all these divisions, who are kept from enjoying followship with each other by the artifice of man. They begin to hear the voice of God "Come out of her, my people." They are breaking the man made fetters by which they have been long bound, and are leaving the wilderness. In every division, with which we are acquainted, there appears to be an uncommon stir; and christian liberty, fellowship, and union is the theme. The division-walls, which are human authoritative creeds, are falling, fast falling in America and in Europe. Who does not see the signs of the times?

Q. 3. Is the present administration of the ordinances of the Lord in any denomination a gospel administration?

A. It is impossible that the administration by every sect can be right, because they all materially differ—they administer the word differently—they administer baptism differently, and with different views of its design—they ad-

minister the Lord's supper differently, frequently denying it to the saints, and giving it to such as profess not to have been regenerated, because they are attached to their creed, party and name. This we are sure is not a gospel administration. Yet we cannot say but in one denomination, the ordinances may be administered according to the gospel.

The fourth query we presume not to answer.

Q. 5. Shall we from the face of scripture look for a period of time in which primitive order and ancient gifts will be restored to the church, and all the people of the Lord be consolidated in one body?

A. Yes: or the prayer of Jesus will remain unanswered, "that all believers should be one." If by *gifts* be understood *miraculous gifts*, we find no authority in the Bible for their restoration—nor can we well see the use of them, seeing revelation is established.

EDITOR.

ELDER NANCE'S QUERIES.

These queries respect the office and work of an evangelist With regard to these we have no particular information. The office is but three times mentioned in the New Testament. Acts xxi, 8. Eph. iv, 11. 1 Tim. iv, 5.—From neither of these can any thing certainly be determined of the office nor work. The word Evangelist signifies a gospel preacher; and such a preacher may be, or may not be a pastor, elder or bishop. Timothy was an Evangelist, and at the same time, it appears, he was a bishop of the church at Ephesus.—On this subject we have given a few thoughts in a preceding number. EDITOR.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

A word to Professors—As published in the CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, a weekly periodical work, published by the Methodists in New York.

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" Let us then strive to provoke one another to love and good works; let our object be, not *merely* to build up a particular sect or denomination, but to bring sinners to the knowledge of the truth, to promote Christianity and godliness; let us try to hasten on

the time, when all shall know the Lord, when the will of God shall be done here on earth, as it is in heaven. But if Christians are guilty of envy, jealousy, hatred, and desesn tion can they charge those that are not christians with the same evil passions, with any consistency! If they do, will they not condemn themselves? "And thinkest thou this, oh man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, thou shalt escape the righteous judgement of God?"—We should treat persons who differ from us in their religious opinions, with candor and moderation. If we think that they are wrong in their opinion, we should not condemn them rashly, we should not condemn them at all, "for it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" We should tell them their faults, between them and us, entreat them in a Christian manner, not to be deceived. We should remember that we are not infallible; that possibly, we may be in an error in regard to our belief. Perhaps we may have received some of our opinions upon trust, and not examined the subject as we should have done. We should examine our own hearts, and see that they do not deceive us, for "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." If there is any subject that we do not understand, we should examine God's word, and pray to him that he would direct us in our examinations, for our Lord commands us to "search the Scriptures, for in them we think we have eternal life, and they are they that testify of him." If religious controversy must be carried on, is it not the duty of Christians to do it in meekness, forbearance, and love? If others revile and persecute us, is it the spirit of a Christian, of a follower of Christ, to revile again, to return railing for railing? Our blessed Master, when he was reviled, reviled not again.—What was his conduct towards those that spit upon him, mocked and scourged him, and nailed him to the cross? Although accused of blasphemy, and that in a false and malicious manner, without the shadow of evidence, arrayed in robes of mock royalty, to their false accusations he answered not a word, insomuch that Pilate, the Roman governor, marvelled. "He was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."—What a lesson is this for Christians to learn! and it ought to be the lesson in the school of Christ. It was a lesson that he taught in the hour of death, a lesson that every sincere follower of Christ should teach, not only by pre-

cept, but by example. Let us judge no man, "but rather judge this, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way."

Extract of a letter from Elder Daniel Long, a Christian preacher, to the Editor, dated

MECHANICSBURGH, (O.) Sept. 15, 1827.

DEAR BROTHER,—As cool water is to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. I left home on June 7th, and joined company with Elder J. N. Long at Dublin in a preaching tour as far as Allegany County, Md. We passed through Westchester, Ohio, where brother John Secrest labors. His labors are greatly blessed at this time. He batized 14 the day before we arrived, and since last winter he has baptized in that section of country some hundreds. We thence went to Smithfield Ohio, and visited elder E. Palmer. Here we found a great reformation, and the work gloriously spreading.

About 30 souls have been added to the church in this section since last winter. Thence we came to Alleghany, Md. Here none of our preachers had ever been. We labored a few weeks among the people with success, though greatly opposed by the Baptist and Methodist preachers. Before we left them we had baptised 58, and constituted them a church, with deacons and exhorters. Some of these bid fair to become workmen that need not be ashamed. I trust to see them again shortly. Yours in the bonds of the gospel.

D. LONG.

Extract of a letter from Elder John Jones, to the Editor, dated

CASEY COUNTY, KY. Aug. 10, 1827.

Being much gratified myself with what my eyes see, and my ears hear, I concluded it would be pleasing to others to hear how the Lord is carrying on his work in my little circle.

Since our last conference in September, I have seen many happy souls following the Lord in the ordinance of Baptism, from the child of 11 years old, to the great grand-mother of 80. In the upper end of Adair and Green counties, the work commenced about last December was a year, and has been spreading and increasing ever since to the very great destruction of party-spirits. At the meetings appointed for worship, may be seen the Baptist, the Methodist, the Presbyterian, with the Christian Brethren all united; and if a strang-

er were looking on, he would not hesitate to say, they were all of one society.

We had a communion in May and another in July near the line between Green and Washington counties, which were truly refreshing seasons. All the Lord's children were invited to the supper, and they generally accepted the invitation; the feast was blessed with the presence of the Lord.—The good work has at length reached my own neighborhood. In May last it first appeared among some little children to the surprize of many, while some opposed, and persecuted, and even threatened them with stripes. But the poor little things still cried to the Lord, who was a present helper, and caused them to be successful in awakening some of their connexions and neighbors. On the 27th of July we baptised 13, in the presence of a numerous croud. About the same number were baptized the week before by brother Price, a separate Baptist, with whom I labor much in the gospel. Bro. James Lunsford, a Christian Preacher in Wayne county, baptized 11 last Friday and three more were received by the church, and many were crying, what shall we do to be saved? In the upper end of this county there is a considerable revival among the separate Baptists. 12 were a few days ago baptized near Riffe's Mill. The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Yours,

JOHN JONES.

Florence August 16, 1827.

Dear Brother,—Our annual meeting commenced, at Antioch, Jackson county, Ala. on Thursday, 26th of July, 1827, under the most convincing evidence of divine favor, and continued until the 31st, at 1 o'clock. During that period, there were devotional exercises, in some way, almost without intermission. I have been trying to preach 20 years, have attended many Conferences and Camp-meetings, but thankfully acknowledge the one at Antioch, far surpassed any thing of the kind I ever beheld. Prejudice, partyism and sin, seemed to fall prostrate before the Ark of God, while the assembled multitudes were pierced to the heart with the darts of truth. The laboring brethren seemed to have lost sight of defending the truth, and to content themselves with letting the truth defend them. Multitudes professed faith in Jesus, and about 30 were baptised in his name. I had the pleasure of administering the supper on the Lord's day, about 10 o'

clock, P. M. -It was one of the most heavenly scenes I ever witnessed—there were about 300 communicants.

At the close of the meeting, it was not easy to find a non-professor on the encampment, and what few remained, seemed to be buried in distress, like those returning from the interment of their friends.

Conference sat on Monday. The Lord being our law giver, has kindly saved us the labor of legislating; of course we had but litte to do, only to make the necessary arrangements for the execution of his laws, and the administration of his word, in which the brethren appeared entirely cordial. We thought proper to limit our conference to the bounds of our state. It is the wish of the brethren, that there be a general Conference, for the purpose of a more general union & uniform understanding. Our Conference, and meeting throughout, was expressive of the most perfect harmony.—Our next Conference, will be held at Huricane, Madison county the first Lords day in February, 1828.

I subjoin the names of the preachers belonging to this Conference.

ORDAINED.—*Elisha Price, John H. Parkhill, Elisha Randolph, Mansel W. Matthews, John M'Daniel, Thacker V. Griffin, Isaac Mulkey, William Clap, Crocket M'Daniel, Robert Baits, Jonathan Wallis, James E. Matthews, Reuben Mardis, E. D. Moore.*

UNORDAINED.—*James Anderson, Lorenzo D. Griffen, Jonathan G. Ward, Wm. J. Price, Mm. W. Wilson, Andrew Russel, Jonathan Parker.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

Brother Stone,—It may perhaps be acceptable to some of the Brethren in the church of Christ to present an item or two in the Christian Messenger, of the proceedings in the Indiana Christian Conference. This conference, met Thursday 6th Sept 1827. At the Blue Spring, Monroe County, Ia. We subjoin the names of the Preachers present.

ORDAINED.—*Lewis Byram, David Stuard, Joseph Berry, Henry D. Palmer, Persius E. Harris, John Herrod, Richard B. M'Corkle, Thomas Wood, Thomas C. Johnston.*

UNORDAINED Preachers & Exhorters—*Richard Empson, Conrad Kern, Samuel Wood, John Duncan John Smart, David C. Steward, John C. Collins, Elijah Goodwin, Wm Conway, John M. Belzer, J. Nicholas.*

The Conference are happy to have it in their power to state that peace and union have attended all their deliberations, for which they feel truly thankful to the great head of the church. This Conference unanimously agree and desire that a general Conference should be appointed in the west for the purpose of more effectually uniting us together and of spreading truth on the earth. Our next Annual Conference to be holden in Bloomington, Ia. Begining on Thursday before the 2d. Lord's day in September 1828. We desire as many of the brethren as conveniently can to attend with us there.—Done by order of the Conference Sept. 7th, 1827. DAVID STEWARD, *Clerk*

P. S. I have just a moment to inform you of our Meeting — I never saw a more solemn time throughout. There was the greatest collection of Communicants I ever have seen at one place. About twenty have professed faith in the Lord Jesus and have been baptized. The great work is yet going on, and I do not know when the Meeting will come to a close. All our young people in the community have been slain in battle, together with all the young people boarding with us going to school.

J. NICHOLS.

Brother Stone,—The following extract, from the minutes of the Madriver Christian Conference, met at Burlington meeting-house, on the first Monday of September 1827, are now forwarded to you to be published in the Christian Messenger.

But before we insert the extract it is necessary to observe, that this Conference was appointed for the special purpose of investigating these three points.

1. The propriety of holding Conference.
2. Of whom should Conference be composed; and
3. What should be the business of Conference?

After having a year to search the scriptures, and deliberate on these important subjects; the Conference unanimously adopted the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That it is useful and proper to hold regular Conferences.

2. *Resolved*, That in the opinion of this Conference, a Christian Conference should be composed of Elders licensed preachers, exhorters, and male messengers.

3. *Resolved*, That in our opinion it is the duty of Confer-

ence to attend to the government of the ministery, and such other things as may be interesting to the churches in general, relative to the administration of the gospel and its ordinances.

4. On motion of Elder Adams, Elder Joseph Thomas was received as a permanent member of this our union meeting, or Christian Conference.

5. On motion of Elder Adams; *Resolved*, That we advise all the christian churches in the bounds of this conference to correspond with it by letter and messengers.

6. *Resolved*, That our next Conference be holden at Union meeting house, near Franklin on the Monday after the first Sabbath of September, 1828.

LEVI PURVIANCE, *Mod'r.*
WILLIAM KINKADE, *Clerke*

THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

Rom. viii, 25. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God &c."

In the verses immediately preceding, the Apostle was viewing the high privileges to which the children of God are exalted. "If Children then heirs, heirs of God and jo nt heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together." These are their privileges. But they must suffer in this world before they can reign with Christ in Glory. But their sufferings are so short, and their glory so great, that they cannot be compared. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

"For the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." By the *creature* is evidently intended the child of God, no other character being spoken of in the chapter, and no other earnestly expecting and waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God, which is equivalent to "waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."—Then, and not before, shall the sons of God be fully manifested; for *now* says John "the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear, what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. "1 John iii, 1–2. No doubt the apostle referred to that immortality or redemption of the body, which is the object of the saint's earnest expectation.

This is that which God predestinated as the portion of the saints, who lived before the coming of the Messiah; "For (says Paul Rom. viii, 29) whom he did fore-know (or approve of before, or of old) these did he also predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first born among many brethren" (the first born from the dead to immortality.) The saints expect this because God has promised it.

V. 20. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him, who hath subjected the same in hope:"

By *vanity* we understand the sufferings and death to which the sons of God, and indeed all the sons of Adam are subjected for the offence of one man. Rom. v.— But a query arises, What subjected them? Some say, the old serpent, the devil did. This cannot be true; for had he subjected them to suffering and death, it was a subjection to absolute despair, and not in hope. Some say, they were subjected by Adam to suffering and death. If so, they were not subjected *in hope*, but in despair; for what ground of hope did sinning Adam present? Some affirm that the Devil by deception subjected them by presenting to our first parents the hope of becoming wise as God, if they should eat of the forbidden fruit. By a little attention to the text in connexion with the subject, it will evidently appear that this was not the object of the hope presented. In the verse following, the word *hoti*, translated *because* should be rendered, *that*; for this is the common translation of the word. Then the reading is this. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same, in hope that the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God." That is, God hath subjected the creature to death, but immediately presented to it the glorious hope of immortality. "For it is appointed unto man once to die." "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return." Had not God presented in *the seed of the woman* the hope of the resurrection from the dead to immortality, life would be intolerable. But now in Christ Jesus, life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel, as the certain portion of all that believe and obey him; and on this condition they are freely offered to the world. The sons of God are now imprisoned in the dark and corruptible prison, the body—They look through the grates

of their prison, and see the liberty which awaits the children of God, and earnestly expect and wait for it, at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

V. 22 "For we know that the whole creation (*pasa he ktisis*, the same word as is translated creature in the preceding two verses and in Mark xvi, 16. "Every creature," meaning, every creature of mankind) groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit: the redemption of our body."—All without exception are subjected to suffering and death, all are groaning under the weight; nor is the saint, the best saint exempted from them, while he is imprisoned in corruptible flesh; but soon he shall receive the redemption of the body; when corruption, sickness, pain and death, shall be known no more to eternity.

EDITOR.

THOUGHTS ON ROM. VIII, 29, 30.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

In the preceding verse, the apostle in speaking of the great privileges of the sons God, says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose."—Then he introduces the verses under consideration as a reason why he knew that all things work together for their good,—"*For* whom he did foreknow, whom he did of old approve of. The apostle had his eye on the saints of old as Moses, Elijah, Abraham, & others—he saw their afflictions, & how, thro' the kind providence of God, they had all eventuated in good to them, and that a greater blessing yet awaited them. The word *foreknow* signifies often in the old and new Testaments to approve of—Thus says the Saviour. "Then will I profess unto them I never *knew* you; depart from me." Matt. vii, 23. The meaning of the word *knew* must certainly be, *I never approved of you.*—So Rom. vii, 15. "For the evil which I do I allow not," (*gignosko*) *I know not.* Quotations to this effect might be multiplied, but it is deemed unnecessary, as it is admitted by all parties of christians.

We remark that the words *foreknew*, *predestinated*, *called*, *Justified*, and *glorified*, are all in the same tense or time, and this in the tense or time past, and not in the present nor future. We therefore think that the passage has been perverted from its true meaning by the various expositors of it. The Universalists try to press it into their service, by affirming that God foreknew the whole fallen world, the evil as well as the good, and whom he foreknew, he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son—and whom he thus predestinated he *will* call, *will* justify, *will glorify*. This perverts Paul's language from the past to the future tense—a latitude unwarrantable. The Calvinists do the same. For say they, God foreknew from eternity his elect—them from eternity he predestinated to the image of his Son—them in time he *will* call, *will* Justify. *will* glorify. If this latitude be admitted, the scriptures may be wrested from their true meaning, to mean any thing. The Arminians have done the same. They say, God from eternity foreknew who would love God in time, these from eternity he predestinated to bear the image of Christ—these he *will* call, *will* justify, *will* glorify.—This exposition is still more absurd than the former, if possible; for the persons foreknown are such as love God—these in time are to be *called* and *justified*; as if no other character is to be called and justified by the gospel! Were we to take the word *foreknew* in its common acceptation, and not to alter the tenses, as others have done, we should be driven in to endless absurdities. Thus God from eternity foreknew and predestinated—from eternity called, and justified, and from eternity glorified! and yet the subjects *called*, *justified* and *glorified* not in existence for countless ages after!!

Taking the meaning of the word *foreknow* as we have shewn to be, *to approve of*, there is no difficulty in the passage. It will read thus: For whom he aforetime approved of, them also he did predestinate—call, justify and glorify. Abel, Enoch, Moses, Abraham, and all the old saints God *approved* of; He predestinated that they should be raised from the dead to immortality, and thus bear the image of the immortal Saviour. But it was also predestinated that this blessing they should not enjoy until Christ should rise first from the dead, and be the first begotten from the dead, that he might be the first born among many brethren, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. These he also called and

justified--called to a participation of the gospel then preached--and justified them who believed and obeyed the call, as he did Abraham and a host of others. These he also glorified--he took their justified spirits to the paradise of glory, while their bodies were lying in corruption and dust. Thus many centuries after the death of Moses, he appeared in his glory conversing with Jesus on a certain mountain. If God has glorified the old saints, who died thousands of years ago, it follows that the doctrine of materialism cannot be true — The Sadducees denied the resurrection of the body, and the existence of spirits, and believed that the spirit or soul died with the body and both ceased forever from existence. But said Jesus to them, quoting a passage from their law, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; but God is not the God of the dead but of the living."— The inference is irresistable, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are living, not their bodies, but their souls or spirits. Surely we may safely conclude that the souls of all the saints are also living and waiting for the redemption of their bodies, which are to be fashioned like the glorious immortal body of Jesus at his coming. EDITOR.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

BROTHER STONE,—When I forwarded my second piece on the government of the church, it was my intention to have prosecuted the subject further; but having been *measurably* anticipated by you, in your editorial remarks—I thought it unnecessary, and therefore declined it. The observations however of a correspondent in your last number, has called forth the few remarks that follow, in addition to your answer. "*Prochorus*," while he "*occupies the place* of an *enquirer*," has entered into a tolerably minute investigation of the subject, and has assumed some positions from which I beg leave to dissent. He is no doubt bound to admit that each church has the privilege of choosing its own officers— for the plain and positive word of God, to which I referred, & upon which I relied in support of the position; has not been opposed nor even attempted to be explained away by him.

Had "*Prochorus* attended to the import of the language I used as quoted by him, it would certainly have rendered his first query (as noticed by you) unnecessary. My expression was that "*each church had, and selected its own officers.*"— Now if a church *selects* its officers; it must certainly be the

proper, and only tribunal that ought to jugde of their qualifications—this is no less scriptural than reasonable. Hence we find the qualifications so particularly and minutely stated, that each church might be in the profession of that knowledge essentially necessary to enable them to elevate suitable persons to those offices, created with a single view to their edification and benefit, and the dissemination of *light* and truth.

I admit that the saviour in his own person, "*called*" and qualified his apostles for their great and responsible duties—but are ministers in the present day, or have they been since the days of the apostles, "*called*" in a similar way?

What preacher now on earth ever heard the saviour say (as he did to his apostles) "*follow me*"? Will we admit it for fact that all are "*called*" of Jesus, who profess to be preachers? If so then he calls men to preach contradictions—divide his flock—promote strife—spread discord and division—and oppose that for which he most devoutly prayed. Does Prochorus himself believe this? If the Saviour does not "*call*" all who declare it, (and I presume there is no man on earth can believe such absurdity.) Who are the particular ones "*called*," and how, and by whom is this important matter to be determined? And if Jesus "*yet calls and qualifies his ministers*" as he did the apostles, why are any instructions given us upon this subject in the scriptures?

If ministers be called now, as the apostles were it would of course render it perfectly useless to give any instructions upon the subject in the New Testament. To be plain, if mankind had followed the scriptures more, and their *whims* less, much of the division, jargon, and confusion of speech amongst christians, would certainly have been obviated. I do not believe that any *special* trust has been vested in the *Elders* to examine, judge, and determine on the qualifications of Elders —I think, that I established the fact in my second No. that it is a matter, that specially concerns the church, Bishops, (or Elders,)Deacons and brethren, altogether. The Elders of course will not participate in ordination, without a belief on their part of the candidate's ability, "*to teach others*," nor is it to be supposed that a church will ever desire any one to be set forward without entertaining a similar opinion. If a church have elders, and desire others, the elders in that particular Society, can proceed to set them apart by the *imposition of hands*." Or should there not be elders, in that particular society; elders from any other society, can proceed

to comply with the wishes of any church by ordaining any individual that may be chosen without the aid of a synod, Conference &c. &c. See Tit i, 5.

If every church was now organized as the apostles set them in order, would not each one have its own officers? And if preachers are a kind of "*common property*," will Prochorus include all from the "*Holy Catholic church*," and her relations down to those who claim no relation with her?

Far be it for me to limit the labors of any preacher, to any particular church, I would rejoice to see them extend their usefulness; crying aloud and sparing not.

Prochorus again says "*if each church is absolutely independent, and authorised to make or choose her own preachers and depose or silence them at pleasure, it would be difficult for preachers to fulfil their mission*, and act in *concert* as fellow laborers *in the harvest of the Lord, and to preserve unity* and harmony in *the churches*." The sentiments indirecly advanced in the above paragragh will justify every high handed and tyranical attempt that has ever been made to Lord it over God's heritage. If the above sentiments be correct, then the synod of Ky., in order to "*unity and harmony*" was justifiable in expelling Marshall, yourself and others for preaching those truths that thousands have since found to be the power of God to their salvation. And if the doctrine had then been universally admitted that a *special* trust was vested in the ministry, where would have been that religious liberty now enjoyed by thousands? You and your co-temporaries must have sunk beneath the cruel edict of an ecclesiastical tribunal unknown in the word of God—this would have been proper to maintain "*concert, unity, harmony*, &c. Yes if it be true that the church is not "*absolutely independent*," and that the preachers are a superior order of people, then will there be a higher tribunal than the church.—Yes, Episcopacy with all its odious, despotic traits will be entirely justifiable. I cannot think that Prochorus does believe the sentiment he advanced in the above extract, it must certainly have dropped unguardedly. As I stated before, I believe that every member whether preacher or not, is responsible to the church, and to the church alone—in proof of which I referred to some scriptures, which I should like to have explained if I am not correct. Should a church become dissatisfied with the doctrine of a preacher, he will not be tolerated as a public speaker, though he should not be denounced for mere a-

pinion, but ought to be borne with as a private member while his walk is holy and pious.

The Conference to which Prochorus alludes in Acts xv, cannot be a precedent for us at present. Preachers are not now placed upon *thrones*, as the apostles were. The history of the acts of the apostles embraces a period of about 30 years, and this is the only account, we have of a special Conference, and this was from the fact, that elevation was not complete—hence say the apostles "*it seemeth good to the holy Ghost* &c. Paul in his second Chap. to the Gal. mentions a visit he made to jerusalem, and speaks of some brethren he met with, as he frequently does, but no intimation of an ecclesiastical court, for the transaction of any "*special trust*"—In conclusion I will assure Prochorus, that I shall regret to see the day when our annual meetings, (for the purpose mentioned in my first number) shall be discontinued; but I hope never to see a meeting among us, arrogating to itself the "*special*" trust, or right of setting forth preachers, or of controling the churches in any manner whatever.

PHILIP.

TO POSTMASTERS.

☞SOME Postmasters have been in the practice of charging double postage for this work. This is improper—the "*Christian Messenger*," is printed on a single sheet, of duodecimo form, (24 pages to a sheet,) and is consequently only subject to a postage of 1 1-2 cents a number, when not sent over 100 miles, and 2 1-2 cents over 100 miles. Post Masters are referred to the following letter from the Post Master General to the Editor of the "*Christian Baptist:*"

General Post-Office Department, Aug. 2, 1827.

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EVERY 24 duodecimo pages of a pamphlet shall be considered a sheet. See the 13th section of the Post-Office Law. The cover is not rated. The "*Christian Baptist*" of November 6, 1826, published at Buffaloe, Va. contain 24 duodecimo pages, and is therefore one sheet and no more, and must be rated with postage accordingly; viz. for any distance not exceeding one hundred miles, 1 1-2 cents, and for any greater distance, 2 1-2 cents.

Yours respectfully,

Rev. A Campbell, JOHN M'LEAN.

Bethany, Brooke county, Virginia.

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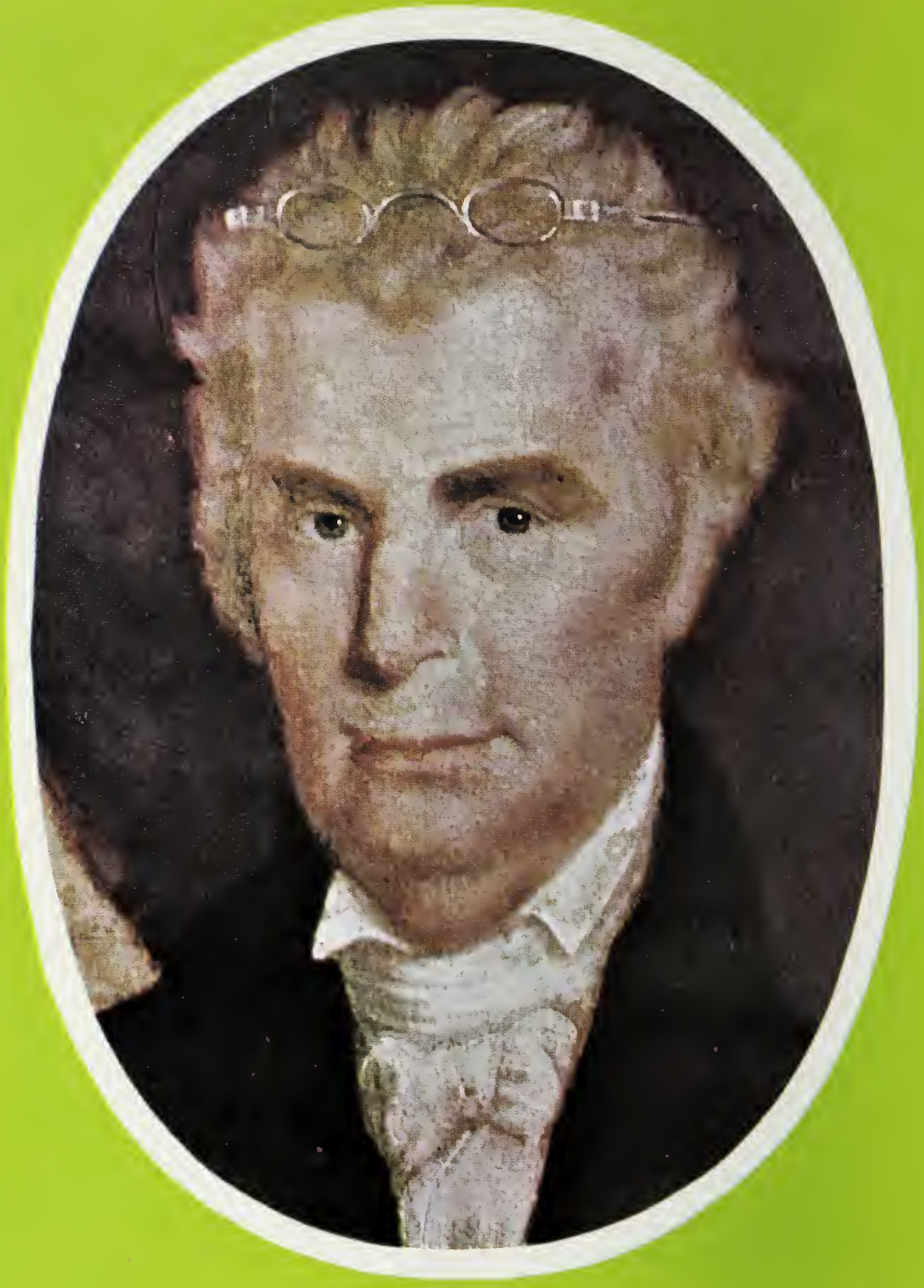

Editor Barton W. Stone

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BY BARTON W. STONE,

AN ELDER IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."—Paul.

Vol. III.] Georgetown, Ky. May, 1829. [No. 7.

NO. III.

STRICTURES ON MR. N. H. HALL'S SERMON,

CONCLUDED.

Mr. Hall says, "The divinity of Christ is clearly proven by the following considerations, viz: the scriptures speak of him as the Mighty God and Father of eternity. Isa. ix. 6. "For unto us, a child is born; unto us, a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."" Mr. H. adds, "This child born, this Son given, is Counsellor in the eternal counsel of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He is the Mighty God; he is the everlasting Father, or Father of eternity."

By Mr. H's. comment on this passage, he has certainly destroyed its sense; for whoever thought of any one being the Father of eternity? If Christ was, he must have existed before eternity, which was impossible. To be Father of any thing, necessarily implies prior existence to that thing. Thus Mr. H. not only makes Christ to have existed from eternity, but before it; for he says, "he was the Father of eternity."

Mr. H. asserts, that this child born, is Counsellor in the eternal counsel of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. The difference between the Prophet and Mr. H. is this: the Prophet speaks of future time, by saying, his name *shall be called* Wonderful Counsellor; whereas, Mr. H. looks back to eternity to find his Counsellor, for he says, "the child was in the eternal counsel, &c." So long as Mr. H. continues to look through spectacles, colored by the Westminster Confession of Faith, and his party, I shall not be surprised, that he should differ from the sacred writers. The eternal counsel, of which Mr. H. speaks, is not in the Bible.

We should bear in mind, that God is the author of the above passage, that the Son of God is the subject; and that the Prophet Isaiah is the describer of this child, or of this Son given: to which add the idea conveyed in verse 7, that the zeal of the Lord will perform this, and the whole subject is easily understood. Taken in its connection, the passage proves, that Jesus Christ is not the eternal, or Almighty God. The eternal God never was

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